

ESSENCE

Taraji

EMPIRE'S QUEEN
ON PLAYING THE
GAME TO WIN

2016
ELECTION
PREVIEW

WHY OUR VOTE
STILL MATTERS

INSTA-
STYLE!

177 WAYS TO NAIL
A NEW LOOK

OUR
#LIFEGOALS
GUIDE

FIND YOUR
DREAM
CAREER

LAUNCH
YOUR NEW
BUSINESS

GIVE UP
BAD
HABITS
FOR
GOOD!



HOW
TO BE
HAPPIER
AT WORK

BLENDED
FAMILIES
THE DOS &
DON'T-YOU-
DARES

NOVEMBER 2015

Just A few OF MY favorites...



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— LEDISI

Grammy-nominated recording artist



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View Ledisi's LookBook
and learn more about her favorite DE Natural products
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*"If you have resilience,
you'll be better off than
when you started."*

– Hillary Nash, business owner

WE ARE #WOMENINSPIRED. WHAT INSPIRES YOU?



“I’m living my dream,” says Hillary Nash, owner of a real estate development company. “That dream may change five years from now. But whatever it is, being resilient will get me there.”

Hillary is inspired to follow her dreams no matter what. See how she and other women empower themselves by pursuing their passions, protecting what they love, investing for tomorrow and much more.

Join them by sharing your story through **#WomenInspired** on Facebook and Twitter. What you’re doing could inspire women everywhere.

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2015

NOVEMBER

VOLUME 46 | NUMBER 7

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ON THE COVER

Photography by Dennis Leupold. Stylist, Jason Rembert for The Wall Group.

Hairstylist, Cesar Ramirez for Mizani at crowdmgmt.com.

Makeup artist, Ashunta Sheriff using Dior Beauty/ Ken Barboza Associates.

Manicurist, Ericka Johnson.

Taraji P. Henson wears a

Fausto Puglisi dress and

Lorraine Schwartz ring.

ON THIS PAGE Taraji is

wearing a Valentino dress

and Gianvito Rossi shoes. For

details, see Where to Buy.

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RAISING OUR VOICES

I'm delighted to share good news with you. During the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual gathering, we announced that political analyst Donna Brazile has joined ESSENCE as a contributor for the upcoming presidential campaign season. We also shared the results of an exciting new poll cosponsored with the Black Women's Roundtable. This formidable civic engagement network advocates for public policies to improve the lives of Black women. In a joint effort to galvanize the power of our vote during the 2016 election cycle, we reached out to thousands of you to hear what issues are top of mind for you. Not surprisingly, affordable health care and earning a living wage were of critical importance. (You can learn more about the results of our national poll on page 96.)

Education also led your list of priorities. We recently spent time with First Lady Michelle Obama, who, with her Reach Higher Initiative, is on a mission to see more young people enter and complete college. Mrs. Obama believes the pursuit of higher learning should be paramount for all of us if we are to ensure a bright future for ourselves and our families. I couldn't agree more; in fact, this fall I moved with my family to a new town in large part to help give my kids an educational leg up in a public school district known for academic excellence.



Our sit-down with First Lady Michelle Obama on September 17, 2015

Equal access and opportunity for all—whether we're talking about health care, pay wages, education or social and political advancement—remain ideas worth fighting for. I hope we'll once again use the power of our vote in the primaries and general election to make it clear to the candidates who would represent us that our voices matter and our votes count.



I'd love to hear what you hope the candidates address this election season. Write to me and share your thoughts.

Stay in touch,

VANESSA K. DE LUCA

Editor-in-Chief

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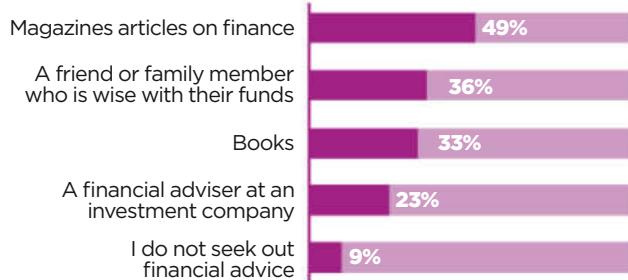
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YOUR FINANCIAL PRIORITIES

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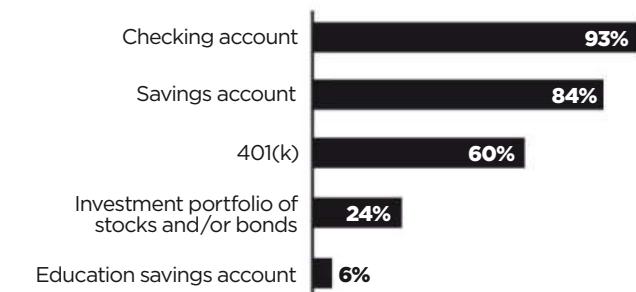
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52%

of ESSENCE
Insiders say
managing their
finances is
overwhelming.



WHERE YOU KEEP YOUR WEALTH



YOU WISH YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT...

▶ STOCKS

"I would love to learn more about them. A few weeks ago, I had a brief conversation with my hairdresser, who owns a sizable amount. She was saying how people should take as little as \$10 and invest it in the market. She definitely had my brain going but my first thought was, *Where do I start?*"

—Charis S., Huntington, New York

▶ BUDGETING

"Getting the most out of what my household earns. I want to learn the basics of money management and how to stick to a fiscal plan."

—Phyllis W., Austin, Texas

▶ INVESTING

"How to select what to invest in, how much to invest and how to invest, all on a shoestring budget."

—Carolyn J., Los Angeles

▶ LONG-TERM PLANNING

"Starting my own business and owning my own home. It's hard to trust someone's advice."

—Andrea M., Atlanta

▶ RETIREMENT

"I wish I knew about retirement options for people with no savings."

—Denise W., Westfield, New Jersey

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Patricia Underwood "Tourneau" evening hat, \$650, 212-268-3774.
2ndDay dress, \$460, The Shop at Scandanavia House, NYC, 212-847-9737. **Gaspar** print leather opera gloves, \$320, gaspargloves.com.

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\$228, bcbg.com.
LaCrasia "Scoop"
feather gloves,
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embroidered
leather gloves,
\$400, by special
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gloves.com.



Philipp Plein lamb leather gloves, \$670, NYC, 212-644-3304.

Gloves International
sheepskin gloves with
zipper, \$78, glovesinternational.com for info.

Banana Republic
"Moto" gloves, \$80,
bananarepublic.com.

Vince Camuto leather gloves,
\$58, vincecamuto.com. △

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DYAD PHOTOGRAPHY
FASHION EDITOR:
JOIEE THORPE

1. BCBGMAXAZRIA

"Tasia" fur and leather booties, \$425, bcbg.com.

2. ASOS

"Element" faux-fur cutout pumps, \$90, asos.com.

3. EUGENIA KIM

"Babs" flats with mink bow, \$495, eugenikim.com.

4. BLUMARINE

mink sandals, \$1,400, blumarine.com.

5. SANTONI

"Eloisa" crocodile sandals with mink fur, price upon request, santonishoes.com.

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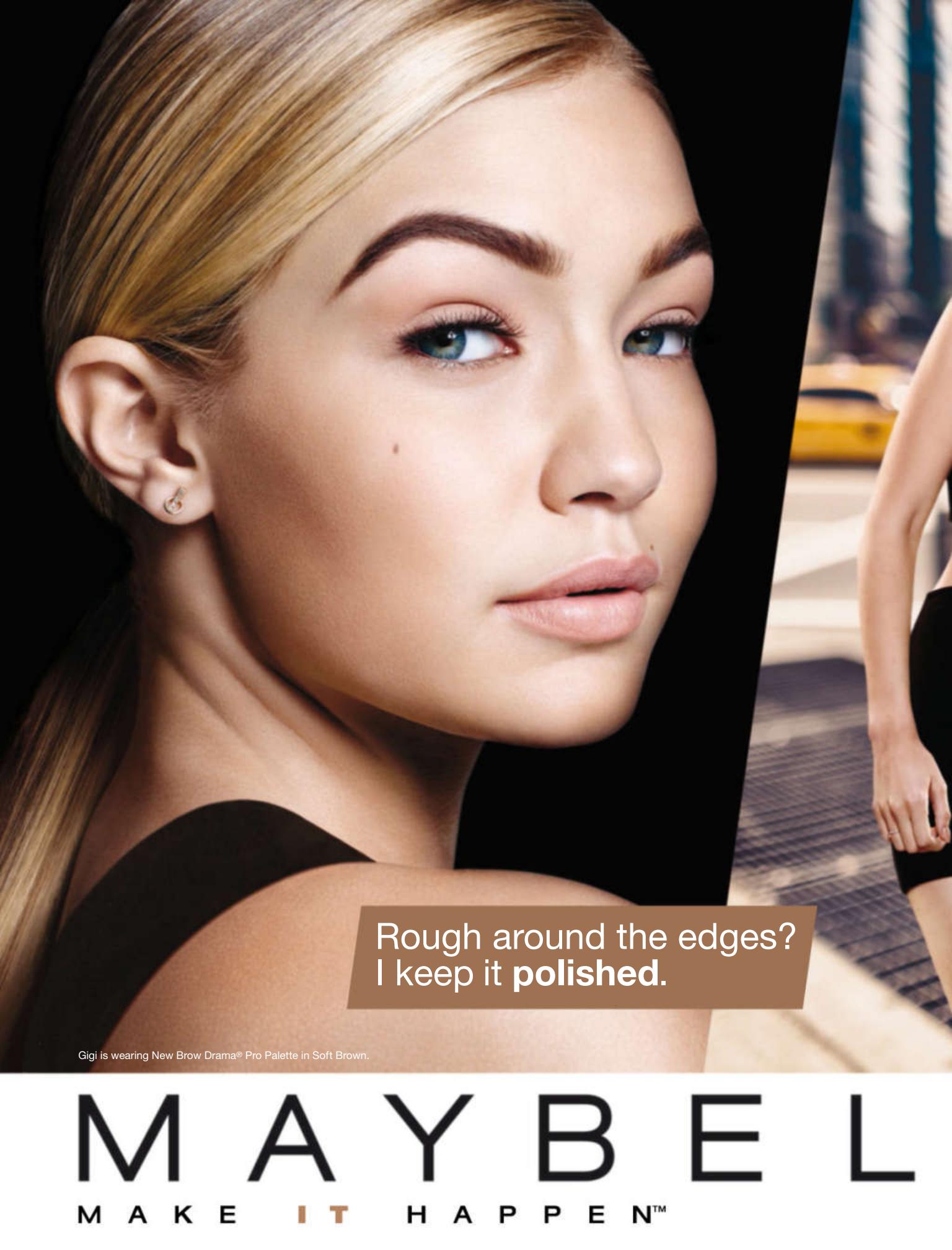
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1



2



3

/ **highlight** for accent

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It Girl

MALIKA HAQQ

E!'S DASH DOLLS STAR, ALONG WITH TWIN SIS KHADIJAH, IS BRINGING L.A. FLAIR TO YOUR LIVING ROOM **BY PAMELA EDWARDS CHRISTIANI**

ESSENCE: Tell us something we don't know about you.

MALIKA HAQQ: My sister and I have been acting since we were kids. Back in the 1980's, we played the same little girl, alternating acting time, on the one hundredth episode of *Benson*.

ESSENCE: Your favorite designers?

M.H.: Helmut Lang and Alexander Wang. I feel well dressed in either on the red carpet. Gianvito Rossi for heels, AG for jeans.

ESSENCE: The difference between your style and Khadijah's?

M.H.: Khadijah could wear leggings and sneakers daily and never change, while I may wear sneakers to the gym but I look forward to putting on nice heels.

ESSENCE: Your beauty must-haves?

M.H.: I love leave-in conditioners, like It's a 10 Miracle Leave-In.

ESSENCE: How did you and Khloé [Kardashian] meet?

M.H.: We met as teenagers through a mutual friend.

I introduced her to my

twin on the same day and the three of us have been friends ever since.

ESSENCE: What do you do in your free time?

M.H.: I mostly spend time taking care of myself...and I spend time with my family. Those are necessities. □



ALEXANDER WANG "Emile" Tote, \$891, farfetch.com.

GIANVITO ROSSI Panned Pumps, \$1,155, net-a-porter.com.



ALEXANDER WANG Peplum Top, \$570, farfetch.com.

ALEXA CHUNG FOR AG JEANS Revolution Boot-Cut Jeans, \$200, net-a-porter.com.



DASH
Key Chain, \$12, shopdashonline.com.

ANGEL THE NEW STAR Eau de Parfum, \$150, muglerusa.com.

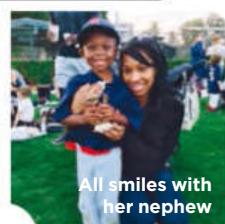


Superchic for an ESSENCE office visit on September 17, 2015

HER INSTA-LIFE!



Malika (right) and sis



All smiles with her nephew



Besties forever!

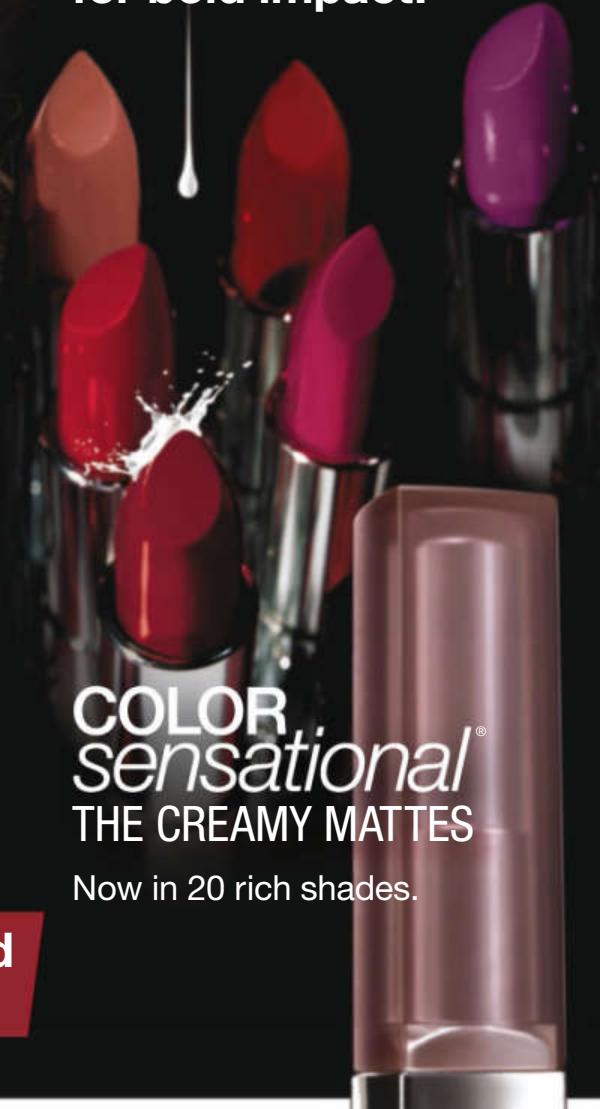


Always reposting Khadijah's pics

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Jourdan is wearing Color Sensational® The Creamy Mattes Lipcolor in Rich Ruby.
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The Nail Files

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CHALLENGE FOUR TOP NAIL ARTISTS TO CREATE TIPS INSPIRED BY FINE JEWELS? PURE MAGIC

BY NYKIA SPRADLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICAELA ROSSATO

Emerald Elegance

ARTIST: MAYUMI ABUKU

@MAYMISAN

Talk about natural beauty! The sparkling emerald-colored crystals found on the surface of this vibrant Kimberly McDonald pendant actually grew there. Abuku went for a greenish gold base topped with sharp white triangles in the center of the nails—a graphic contrast to the round edges of both the pendant and the opal ring. The backs of the nails were painted white for a surprise.

BEAUTY



Snake Charmer

**ARTIST: DANA CODY
@TIPPIETOEDIVA**

To play up the dark and mysterious feel of Madyha Farooqui's serpent ring, Cody went for a deep oxblood polish. The ring and hand chain are delicate pieces, so the accent on the nails was focused mainly on or near the tips. On the middle nail, Cody placed a round gold appliqué with a Swarovski ruby crystal on the inside—similar to the rubies on the eyes of the snake. "The wrist all the way down to the ring on the center of the nail tells a story," says Cody. ▷

Opening page: **Kimberly McDonald**

Yowah opal and emerald ring
and uvarovite garnet pendant.

This page: **Madyha Farooqui** rose gold
serpent ring and amethyst hand chain.

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Simply Stellar

ARTIST:
GINA EDWARDS
@GINAEDWARDS_

Inspired by the moon-shaped circles on this Casa Reale ring, Edwards did a silvery blue ombre paint job on four fingers, topping them with chunky glitter and circular stones. The ring finger was painted a deep navy. It accents the celestial-like jewelry pieces without being an exact interpretation of it. ▶

Casa Reale white gold
black rhodium ring
with diamonds.



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HAIR DAY



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Available at select Walmart

Smokin' Aces

ARTIST:
MEI KAWAJIRI
@CIAOMANHATTAN2012

When it comes to next-level creativity, Kawajiri overflows with it. So when we asked her to create an abstract version of Alison Lou's playful fine jewelry, she happily accepted the challenge. Since the same design on each finger would be boring (right?!), Kawajiri used Lou's #1 diamond ring as a starting point for a different mini masterpiece on each finger. "I wanted to make the nails feel like an extension of Alison's collection: elegant yet youthful," says Kawajiri.

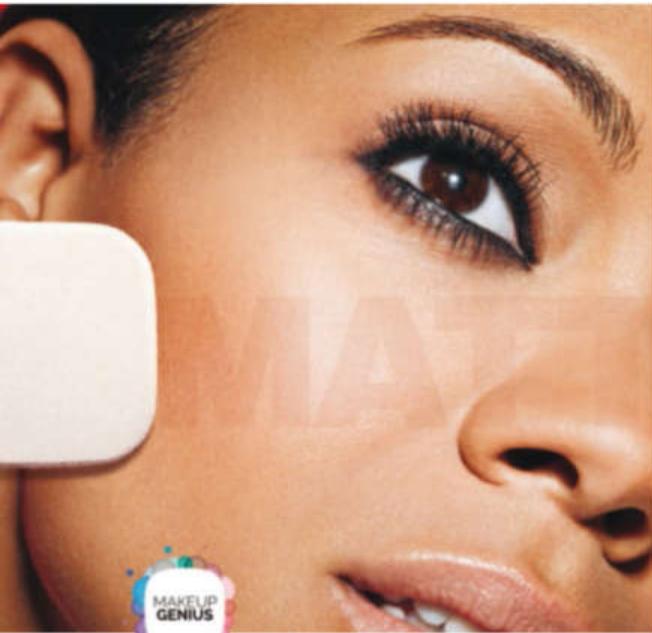
Alison Lou "#1" gold ring with black enamel and diamonds.

For jewelry details, see Where to Buy.

Zoe Saldana
CLASSIC TAN 109

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MAKEUP DESIGNER/PARIS

30 DAYS OF BLACK BEAUTY

NEW BEAUTY MUST-HAVES IN EVERY COLOR OF THE RAINBOW!

BY ANDREA JORDAN

9

A trifecta of oils (black cumin, rose hip and camellia) seriously nourishes your skin.



13 Indulge in a set of all-you-need brushes in a pretty autumn ombre.



1

This silky serum meets gel refreshes and moisturizes.



2

Seductive notes of jasmine, apricot and musk for the dreamer in you.



6

Here's the perfect pencil to complement your poppy lip shades.



10

A powdery floral fragrance filled with vanilla and rose offers a clean scent with a sweet finish!



2



Try this super-feminine floral perfume that has a hint of vanilla.

11

The ultimate matte red for a classic old-Hollywood-glam pout.



12

Amino acids, natural silk and crushed pearls are formulated to deliver a radiant complexion.



14

Pucker up for this plumlike pink hue with a dash of shimmer!



3

Chamomile, coconut and jojoba help to hydrate your kisser!



He'll be irresistible in this scent infused with Maninka fruit, an aphrodisiac.

8

Burnt orange tips in luxurious lacquer are essential for fall.



15

This antiaging find with red ginseng promotes radiance and firmness. ▷

1. Lancôme Hydra Zen Moisturizing Beauty Essence (\$49, lancome-usa.com). **2. Viktor & Rolf** Flowerbomb Fireworks Limited Edition (\$120, Sephora). **3. Honest Beauty** Magic Balm (\$18, honestbeauty.com). **4. Wildfox** Eau de Parfum (\$70, 1.7 oz, Nordstrom). **5. Hugo Boss** Boss The Scent (\$85, 100 ml, Macy's). **6. Sisley** Phyto-Levres Perfect in Coral (\$57, sisley-paris.com). **7. Yves Saint Laurent Beauté** La Laque Couture N°61 Brun Henné (\$27, yslebeauty-usa.com). **8. Kat Von D** Studded Kiss Lipstick in Halo (\$21, sephora.com). **9. The Body Shop** Oils of Life Revitalizing Facial Oil (\$39, thebodyshop-usa.com). **10. Flower by Kenzo** L'Elixir (\$92, 1.7 oz, bloomingdales.com). **11. Charlotte Tilbury** Matte Revolution Lipstick in Red Carpet Red (\$32, charlottetilbury.com). **12. Cle de Peau Beauté** Limited Edition Le Serum (\$325, cledepeabeauté.com). **13. Sonia Kashuk** Ombré Obsessed Seven-Piece Brush Set (\$26, Target). **14. Dior Addict** Lipstick in Be Dior (\$35, dior.com). **15. Erborian** Elixir Au Ginseng (\$110, Sephora).

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SheaMoisture.com



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IN AMERICA



cruelty
free

16

Apply a quarter-size pump to simplify your blow-dry and protect strands from heat.

**17**

Raspberry, peony and a dash of creme brûlé will keep you smelling sweet all night long.

**18**

This awesome lip balm has just the right amount of buildable color.

**19**

The UV-baked ceramic technology plates offer even heat distribution for smooth, silky hair!

20

Say yes to violet this season with a glossy lacquer that has rich color payoff.

**21**

Feeling daring? Purple lipstick with a pearlescent finish will be eye-catching.

**22**

A gorgeous midnight blue powder shadow that makes your peepers pop.

**23**

Kaffir lime, mandarin and cedarwood blend together for a winter-vacay scent for him.

**24**

Heal breakouts while you work, sleep or play with invisible treatment dots you can wear all day.

25

An effective exfoliator, it removes impurities and reduces pore size for babylike skin.



26 Go bold with a thin cat eye in a shimmery green hue.

**29****30**

Notes of saffron, rose and oud give this Dubai-inspired scent an exotic flair.

**27**

Quench thirsty locks with a simple spritz!

**28**

Restorsea's proprietary ingredient, Aqua-beautine, turns skin around in no time flat.



16. Redken Glow Dry Blow-Dry Oil (\$32, redken.com for salons). **17.** Avon Outspoken Party! By Fergie (\$34, avon.com). **18.** Fresh Sugar Fig Tinted Lip Treatment SPF 15 (\$23, fresh.com). **19.** Remington UV Baked Ceramic Iron (\$28, Walmart). **20.** Giorgio Armani Beauty Ecstasy Lacquer in 600 Adrénaline (\$38, armanibeauty.com). **21.** Lipstick Queen All That Jazz in Whoopee Spot (\$28, spacenk.com). **22.** Chanel Ombre Essentielle Soft Touch Eyeshadow in Swing (\$30, chanel.com). **23.** Tommy Bahama St. Kitts for Men Eau de Cologne Spray (\$65, tommybahama.com). **24.** Peter Thomas Roth Acne-Clear Invisible Dots (\$30 for 72 dots, peterthomasroth.com). **25.** Dr. Brandt PoreDermabrasion (\$58, Sephora). **26.** Clinique Skinny Stick in Thin Mint Limited Edition (\$17, clinique.com). **27.** L'Oréal Paris Power Moisture 10-Second Hydra-Detangler (\$7, Target). **28.** Restorsea Pro Intensive Treatment 10X (\$195, restorsea.com for info). **29.** Rene Furterer Forticea Stimulating Shampoo (\$29, 6.76 oz, renefurtererusa.com). **30.** Bond. No 9 Dubai Emerald (\$550, bondno9.com).

Clean is one thing. **DOUBLE CLEAN** is the new thing.

Introducing the Double Cleansing Method from Neutrogena®, for skin so clear, it glows from within.

STEP 1 – Remove Surface Impurities

Neutrogena® Makeup Remover Cleansing Towelettes

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STEP 2 – Clean Deep Into Pores

Neutrogena® Deep Clean® Gentle Scrub

Oil and dirt trapped in pores can make skin look dull and lead to breakouts. With gentle exfoliators and Beta Hydroxy acid, our scrub removes 99.9% of dirt and microtoxins to reveal clear skin that glows from within.

Nothing works better.

doublecleansing.com



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#1 Dermatologist Recommended Skincare

10 UNDER \$10

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED FROM HEAD TO TOE WITH A FRESH BATCH OF GOODIES TO TRY THIS MONTH!

BY ANDREA JORDAN

1. The light body lotion leaves your skin silky soft.

• **EOS** Body Lotion in Delicate Petals (\$3.99, 6.8 oz, Target)

2. This collection of scented balms filled with shea butter and marshmallow extract (yum!) will keep your lips kissable all season long.

• **Le Couvent des Minimes** Smile Lip Balms (\$9 each, Ulta)

3. Here's your cold-weather quick fix for chapped hands.

• **Karuna** Hydrating+ Hand Mask (\$9.50 each, sephora.com)

4. Brushing is fun with an adorable animal cover to protect tiny toothbrushes from debris and germs.

• **DenTek** Toothbrush Cover (\$3.49, Walmart)

5. Packed with jojoba, aloe and vitamin E, this moisturizer is oh, so good for dry skin.

• **e.l.f.** Skincare Daily Hydration Moisturizer (\$8, Target)

6. This combo of argan oil, vitamins and aloe will keep skin glowing without leaving an oily film.

• **Promise Organic** Argan Creme Facial Cleanser With Soap Berries (\$7.99, CVS)

7. Blue agave extract helps bring curls back to life, giving them bounce and shine.

• **Nuance Salma Hayek** Blue Agave Curls & Waves Hair Mask (\$9.99, CVS)

8. Transform ordinary toilet tissue into a wet wipe with a simple spritz!

• **Aquinelle** Toilet Tissue Mist (\$4.99, 3.25 fl oz, Harmon Face Values)

9. This all-natural deodorant is infused with lemon peel oil to freshen and keep odor-causing bacteria at bay.

• **Weleda** Citrus Deodorant (\$9, 1 oz, usa.weleda.com)

10. One swipe produces a sheer tinted hue, but add a few more and you've got a beautiful, bold pout.

• **Palladio** Butter Me Up! Sheer Color Lip Balm in Glaze, Bonbon and Tart (\$8 each, palladiobeauty.com)



4 Products For **FLAWLESS** HAIR ON CAMPUS

Discover the styling products that have Essence readers raving

Split ends, breakage and frizz... you don't have time for that. You want hair that is smooth, shiny and soft to the touch. Ultra Sheen Supreme is your styling solution for flawless hair on and off campus.

The Ultra Sheen Supreme styling line addresses the specific needs of relaxed, natural and transitioning hair. These products have been formulated with nourishing ingredients castor oil, shea and mango butter which aid in reducing breakage, smoothing cuticles and soothing frizz. But don't take it from us, see what these campus cuties have to say...



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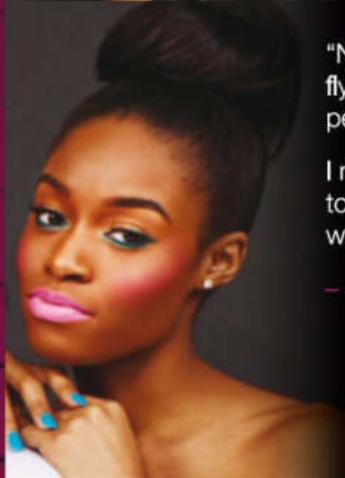
ADVERTISEMENT



"I love to wear my hair straight and the last thing I want is thermal damage from flat ironing every day."

So to stretch my time and keep my hair on fleek I use **#SLEEK**. This anti-reversion serum keeps my hair straight and smooth."

- Audrianna (Flat Ironed)



"Nothing is more annoying than having fly-aways when trying to achieve the perfect look."

I make sure to keep **#LAID** in my bag to flawlessly add moisture and shine, while making sure my edges stay put."

- Skye (Controlled Edges)



"Regardless if I want to rock a rod set or just wash and go **#SLAYED**, styling lotion gives me soft hold without crunch or flakes."

- Amber (Naturalista)



"In between washing I want to make sure that my hair does not look dull which is why I use **#SHINE**, polishing serum every morning before I head to class."

- Myasia (Shine)



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¹Available feature. ²Cargo and load capacity limited by weight and distribution. Always secure all cargo. Heavy loading of the vehicle with cargo, especially on the roof, will affect the handling and stability of the vehicle. ³Passengers should not ride in the reclined position while the vehicle is in motion. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. © 2015 Nissan North America, Inc. All rights reserved.

A close-up photograph of a woman with voluminous, curly, light brown hair. She is looking directly at the camera with a playful expression, her left hand raised to give a peace sign while her right hand is near her face. Her eyes are dark and expressive. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of her hair and skin.

Insta-Stars

NEED A LITTLE HAIRSPIRATION? WE'RE MAJORLY CRUSHING ON THESE TEN LADIES ON INSTAGRAM

BY NYKIA SPRADLEY

These days, if you're stuck in a hair rut or just want a pretty pick-me-up, look no further than Instagram. In search of cool, accessible and creatively fresh looks, we combed through (pun intended) some of our favorite feeds to find trendsetters who are making us swoon over their styles.

HAIR

MANE CHICKS

TRENDING NOW: ENDLESS STYLE INSPIRATION

@jfashiongirl87

JESSICA PETTWAY

In one word my feed is... Regal.

I'm inspired by... Stylish women from all over the globe and, most important, my daughter and selfie buddy, Kai.

Selfie 101: First clean the lens. Next, find the perfect lighting. Then find your angles and werk!

My secret weapon photo app is...

I absolutely love Perfect365. It's great at making your pics look flawless!

Most memorable moment on IG...

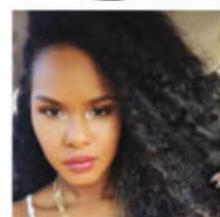
A head wrap selfie I took with my daughter that went viral.

In one word my Instagram feed is... Regal.

—JESSICA PETTWAY



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JESSICA PETTWAY (4); LLOYDTHEABSTAC (3); GLAMTWINKELSI (2); MICHAEL CARSON



@glamtwinke1

KELSEY MURRELL

In one word my feed is... Inspiring.

I'm inspired by... My awesome followers!

Selfie 101: Good lighting and know your best angles!

My secret weapon photo app is...

Facetune.

Most memorable moment on IG...

Reaching 100,000 followers!



@themindofmutiny

LOREDANA ITUAH

In one word my feed is... Crescive.

I'm most inspired by... Any type of art that sends a message.

Selfie 101: Great lighting and confidence.

My secret weapon photo app is...

Aviary photo editor.

Most memorable moment on IG... The FACES Web series I participated in. ▷

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pads!

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always
discreet



*vs. Poise. **based on average U.S. consumer usage. †while supplies last.

HAIR : HEADLINERS



@SimplyCyn

CYNTHIA ANDREW

In one word my feed is... Happy.
I'm inspired by... Life, travel, other people, but mostly happy moments.

Selfie 101: Give yourself a few options, good lighting is key, always shoot from eye level or above, and be natural.

My secret weapon photo app is... I love Aviary and Snapseed for photo editing on the go.

Most memorable moment on IG... My travel moments are always the most moving. I go back to see where I've been.



@stylecarmen

CARMEN LILLY

In one word my feed is...

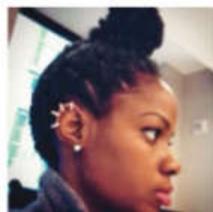
Inspirational.

I'm inspired by... Anything that I feel evokes true style and my intention to motivate.

Selfie 101: I don't really take selfies. I need some tips for people with short arms!

My secret weapon photo app is... Camera+ for cropping and adding borders to my photos—it's a one-stop shop!

Most memorable moment on IG... I like posting about my other designer friends, especially the emerging talent.



@naturally_zeze

ZEINAB MURSAL

In one word my feed is...

Fro-fabulous!

I'm inspired by... My East African culture mixed with my London upbringing.

Selfie 101: Lighting, lighting and lighting! Don't take it too seriously, capture the moment and let your personality shine through!

My secret weapon photo app is...

Instant Picframe to make really cool photo collages with text.

Most memorable moment on IG... I always go back to a picture collage I created of my natural hair journey over the past five years. It really helps me see my progress. ▶

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SIMPLYCYN.COM (4); NATURALLY_ZEZE (3); PETE MONSANTO/@FLYIMAGES (2); @STYLECARMEN

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STYLISTS TO WATCH

THESE FAB FOUR ARE TURNING HEADS
(AND TRANSFORMING HAIR) WITH THEIR MAGIC FINGERS



PEKELA RILEY

► @PekelaRiley
In one word my feed is...
Hairspiration!
I'm most inspired by... The beauty mood of the day.
Selfie 101: Lighting! Also, holding the camera slightly overhead to slim the face.
My secret weapon photo app is... Self Retouch to get a soft spot blur effect.
Most memorable moment on IG... Launching my #SuccessCamp classes. I was blown away by how enthusiastic other stylists were to come and be a part of it.



LEISELLE BARNETT

► @Hairbyleiselle
In one word my feed is...
Breathtaking.
I'm inspired by...
My clients and followers.
Selfie 101: Great lighting and good makeup.
My secret weapon photo app is... MoreBeauté.
Most memorable moment on IG... When my followers and clients express their love and appreciation for the work I've posted. Their comments encourage me to work even harder.



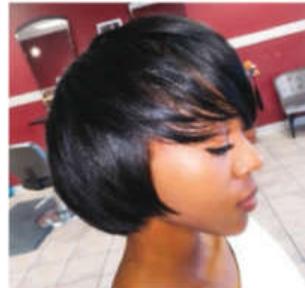
GILLIAN GARCIA

► @artistry4gg
In one word my feed is...
Amazing.
I'm inspired by... The excitement that my clients and I get about my work.
Selfie 101: Clean your lens. Make sure your background is free of clutter, and always keep your back to the lights.
My secret weapon photo app is... Camera360.
Most memorable moment on IG... The first time I got reposted by @thecutlife. I was jumping up and down like I just hit the lotto.



SHADDAH ELYSE

► @shaddah_elysel
In one word my feed is...
Versatile.
I'm inspired by... Evolution, change, art and fashion.
Selfie 101: Find your angle. Be original, be you!
My secret weapon photo app is... I love switching the lighting here or there. I get blemishes, so I will blur them using Facetune.
Most memorable moment on IG... When my work was recognized by @thecutlife. My following climbed dramatically. I was so excited.



BY ROW FROM TOP: ROW 1: COURTESY OF SALONPK.COM (4); ROW 2: COURTESY OF HAIRBYLEISELLE (3); ROW 3: COURTESY OF GILLIAN GARCIA (ARTISTRY ASTONISHING PHOTOS) (3); ROW 4: COURTESY OF SHADDAH ELYSE/THE PLATINUM STUDIO (3).



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HAIR SERIES

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New Dove Quench Absolute
Perfectly nourished hair +
beautifully defined, natural curls

Dove knows that naturally curly hair is drier and most in need of nutrient-rich care to stay nourished, strong and manageable. Introducing our most nourishing range ever, NEW Dove Quench Absolute. Infused with Buriti Oil, this rich and creamy range locks in moisture to quench thirsty hair for beautifully defined, healthy looking, touchable curls. Perfectly nourished hair + 4X more defined*, natural curls.

* Quench Absolute Shampoo, Conditioner or Mask and Crème Serum versus non-conditioning shampoo.



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AND REVIVE WITH THESE
FAB HAIR HELPERS

FOR
THE
LITTLE
ONES



Comb through delicate kiddie manes with it before shampooing to make detangling a breeze.

JUST FOR ME
Hair Milk Pre-Wash
Softening Detangler
(\$5, Walmart)

Spray from root to tip to plump up strands and banish breakage over time.

BUMBLE AND BUMBLE. Full Potential Hair Preserving Booster Spray (\$60, bumbleandbumble.com)

Shake to activate the blend of teas in this antioxidant-rich hair primer.

PAI-SHAU Biphasic Infusion (\$45, pai-shau.com for locations)

FOR
HEALTHY
HAIR &
SCALP



The yogurt-inspired containers hold ready-to-mix conditioner and hair oil for shine and moisture.

ORS SHEALICIOUS
Moisture Lock, Scalp
Relief and Shine
Booster (\$3 each, CVS)

A hair spray that doesn't compromise on hold, sans the drying effects of alcohol? This one's definitely a keeper.

PANTENE
Airspray (\$7, drugstores)



Pump up lackluster tresses with a color-enhancing cleansing and conditioning combo.

JOICO Color Infuse Copper Shampoo and Conditioner (\$16 and \$18, joico.com)



"I apply this hair mask once a week to help keep my color and dry ends in check."

—NYKIA SPRADLEY,
BEAUTY EDITOR



KEVIN.MURPHY
Hydrate-Me.Masque
(\$39, kevinmurphy.com.au for salons)



"A genius tool for in-shower detangling! Fill with conditioner and enjoy a smoothing comb-through."

—PAMELA EDWARDS CHRISTIANI,
BEAUTY & STYLE DIRECTOR

REMINGTON Shower
Conditioning Brush (\$10, Target)

"The perfect choice for hydration when the harsh winds make my curls dull and knotty."

—ANDREA JORDAN,
ASSISTANT BEAUTY EDITOR

HELLO HAIR Hydrating Mask
Island Escape Edition (\$18, hellohair.com.au)



STILLS, CHRISTINE BLACKBURN: PROP STYLIST, CHANEL KENNEBREW SPRADLEY AND JORDAN, MICHAEL ROWE, CHRISTIANI, WARWICK SAINT

MAKE YOUR STORY LEGENDARY.



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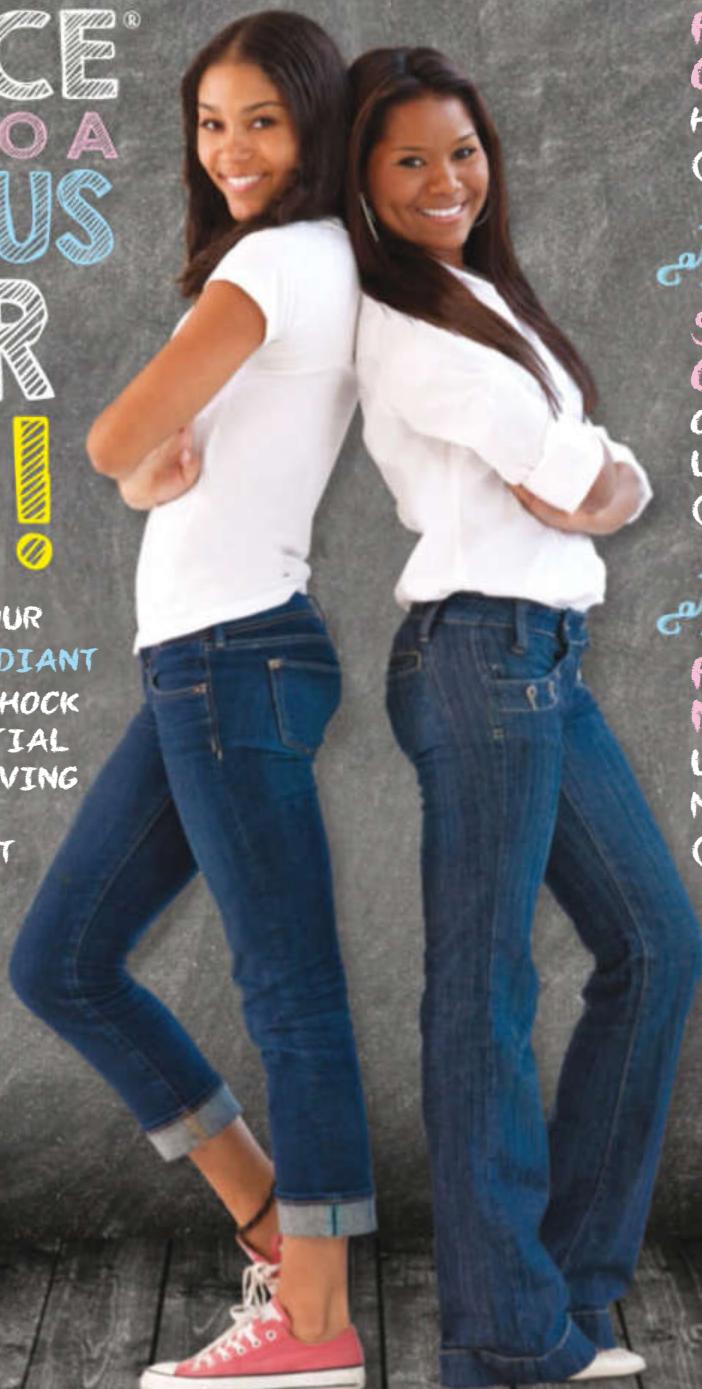
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YOU!

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OCTOBER 16
HAMPTON UNIVERSITY
(HAMPTON, VA)

and

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GIRL GONE WILD

JILL MARIE JONES IS
READY FOR THE KILL

BY TAIIA SMART YOUNG
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DENNIS LEUPOLD

Jill Marie Jones, one of our beloved *Girlfriends*, returns to the TV grind as Amanda Fisher, a Michigan state trooper with a serious ax to grind in Starz's new fantasy-horror-comedy series *Ash vs. Evil Dead*. After she snagged a recurring gig on *Sleepy Hollow*, joining a show about zombies made sense for the star, who lists *Friday the 13th* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* as her favorite scary movies. Still, *Ash* (premiering October 31) is a huge departure from her previous projects. "I'm kicking so much butt," admits the former Dallas Cowboys cheerleader. For the job, she learned harness work, mixed martial arts and the proper way to tote a firearm. "Everyone hasn't seen everything that I've done, like all the independent [projects].... They think of me as the comedy girl. That was the hardest thing, changing perceptions." Change is good.

SCENE

SCENE : COMEDY SPECIAL

A Night of Laughs

FIVE SERIOUSLY FUNNY WOMEN
WE'RE LOVING RIGHT NOW

BY TAIIA SMART YOUNG
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JILL GREENBERG





When people talk about comedy, it's still an old boy's club and Black women are often left out of the conversation with the exception of a few popular names: Wanda Sykes, Mo'Nique and Maya Rudolph. But a bevy of fresh, hilarious, acerbic comics—Michelle Buteau, Naomi Ekperigin, Phoebe Robinson, Yamaneika Saunders and Robin Thede—are leaving audiences in stitches with their keen take on race, gender, dating and sex.

While *Saturday Night Live* was once considered the holy grail in their industry, these funny ladies are blazing new trails. Robinson hosts comedy showcase *Blaria LIVE!* with fellow humorist and bestie Jessica Williams of *The Daily Show*. Saunders earned a panelist's gig on *The Meredith Vieira Show*; Buteau released a comedy album, *Shut Up!*, last September. "There's this trend, thanks to Twitter, thanks to Black Twitter... People are like, *I'm sick of turning on the TV and seeing the same ten people. I'm sick of not seeing myself represented*," says Ekperigin, writer for Comedy Central's *Broad City* and Hulu's *Difficult People*.

Thede, head writer on *The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore*—the first Black woman to lead a comedy writers' room—agrees. "[The powers that be] are realizing diverse people in front and behind the camera can make shows money," she says. At the end of the day, it seems funny knows no color. ▷

HAIR: MARCELLO COSTA / KEN BARBOZA.COM; MONAE EVERETT / KEN BARBOZA.COM, AND MANNINANCE / KEN BARBOZA.COM; MAKEUP: FRANK GUYTON / KEN BARBOZA.COM, MERRELL HOLLIS / KEN BARBOZA.COM, AND MIYAKO J / KEN BARBOZA.COM; MANICURE: MISS POP; STYLING: WOUR VICE. FOR CLOTHING DETAILS, SEE WHERE TO BUY.

SUPER COMEDY SPECIAL



NAOMI EKPERIGIN

AGE 31, stand-up comic and writer for Comedy Central's *Broad City* and Hulu's *Difficult People*

ON FINDING HER STORYTELLING SWEET SPOT:

It was about what felt the most fun and natural. They say a big part of stand-up is, "Develop your voice. Figure out who you are onstage." Also I had to trust my gut that I was funny. I'm using that skill in a different way, not for myself onstage but for other characters.

PHOEBE ROBINSON

AGE 31, stand-up comic, creator/cohost of *Blaria LIVE!*, author of the upcoming memoir *You Can't Touch My Hair*

ON DEVELOPING HER ACT:

There was never any thought like I'm going into this with an agenda. In the beginning I was like, *Hmm, what's funny to me? I live in Brooklyn and I get catcalls.* Okay, that's a joke. I was trying to grab for anything I think is funny.

MICHELLE BUTEAU

AGE 38, stand-up comic, Comedy Central's *The Half Hour* and album *Shut Up!*

ON SWITCHING FROM NEWS TO COMEDY:

I studied journalism and worked at NBC...9/11 happened and for months I'd work 12- to 16-hour shifts editing the most horrible video. NBC offered therapy for all the workers. I was like "No, I'll just do stand-up." Stand-up was my therapy.



YAMANEIKA SAUNDERS

THIRTIES, stand-up comic, Oxygen's *Funny Girls* and *The Meredith Vieira Show*

ON JOINING THE MEREDITH VIEIRA SHOW:

I'm honored to have the opportunity because it came from me being a guest on the show. When I go onstage, I'm not interested in not telling people exactly how I feel. I don't have this filter to say, "Well, I don't know how this person is going to receive it, so I don't want to say it."



ROBIN THEDGE

THIRTIES, actress and head writer, *The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore*

ON GETTING HER BIG BREAK:

It's everything I wanted—to work on a show that's smart and topical. Even when horrible things like Baltimore and Ferguson happen, we never make fun of the events. We make fun of people's inherent prejudices when they cover these tragedies.



Fashion stylist **Wouri Vice** (@wourivice) has worked with ESSENCE, *Vanity Fair*, *InStyle*, *Allure* and more.



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SCENE : PATRIK'S PICKS



Patrik Henry Bass

SOCIAL STUDIES

OUR RESIDENT BOOKWORM SELECTS FIVE READS THAT DELVE DEEP INTO HISTORY AND THE AFFAIRS OF THE HEART

1 FIRE THIS TIME

Pulitzer Prize-winning *Miami Herald* columnist Leonard Pitts, Jr., proved he was an

adroit novelist with *Freeman* (Agate Bolden), his 2012 fiction breakout. Now, with **Grant Park** (Agate Bolden, \$24.95),

Pitts carves out his own turf as one of the nation's most potent social commentators. Here's all you need to know before curling up with this epic tale: Grant Park is the real-life setting where Barack Obama accepted the presidency on election night on November 4, 2008. Pitts masterfully revisits that historic night and four decades of the civil rights struggle to create one of the most suspenseful and spectacular fictitious moments you'll experience this fall.



Leonard Pitts, Jr.

2 DISCOVER THE OTHER HAMILTON

Just when you thought you'd heard it all when it comes to remarkable achievements by Black folks... Have you ever heard of Jeremiah G. Hamilton? Thought so. Me either, until I picked up

Prince of Darkness: The Untold Story of Jeremiah Hamilton, Wall Street's First Black Millionaire (Palgrave, \$28). Historian Shane White examines the colorful, complex life of the man who in the eighteenth century was reportedly the wealthiest Black man in the United States—with a fortune of \$2 million or in excess of \$250 million (estimated) in today's currency.



Kevin Powell

5 FOLLOW THIS MAN-CHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND

Long before *The Real Housewives* and *Big Brother*, there was MTV's hit *The Real World*. One of the most memorable cast members in that franchise remains Kevin Powell. Now, almost 23 years after the show's debut, Powell is sharing his life story. It's been quite a life. **The Education of Kevin Powell** (Atria, \$26) is a must-read for any mother raising a young Black man, and any African-American male trying to cope with the edict he's been handed of being a strong (but not too strong) Black Man. Powell revisits wounds from childhood (abandonment by his father) and adulthood (alcoholism and depression), and instead of staying mired in dysfunction he provides a blueprint of hope. Credit Powell for laying out his soul on his relationships and the struggle to love himself.



Goldberg offers her no-nonsense take on finding your soul mate.

3 HBCUs MATTER

In a widely read August 2013 feature in this magazine, former Bennett College president Dr. Julianne Malveaux asked, "Is There a War on HBCUs?" In the expertly researched and exquisitely written **Where Everybody Looks Like Me: At the Crossroads of America's Black Colleges and Culture** (Amistad, \$26.99), Ron Stodghill picks up

where that story left off. The former *New York Times* writer gives an exclusive peek into the private world of the boards of directors, the modern Talented Tenth and boldface names on the front lines in the fight to keep our 104 precious American institutions alive for future generations.



Ron Stodghill

4 ASK WHOOPIS

Can you believe it's been 30 years since Whoopi Goldberg made her film debut in *The Color Purple*? Since then Goldberg has captured every conceivable honor for an entertainer, including an Oscar, a Grammy, a Tony and an Emmy. The New York City native has made us cry and has made us think. But mostly she has made us smile—which she does overtime with her latest project. In **If Someone Says "You Complete Me," Run!** (Hachette, \$26), Goldberg offers unexpurgated advice on matters of the heart. Being quintessential Whoopi, she cautions that this book is not coming from a relationship expert, but instead from a person who's learned many lessons in the search for true love. Ever the sassy sage, the comedian says, "I thought maybe I could help you all steer clear of the common mistakes we seem to make."



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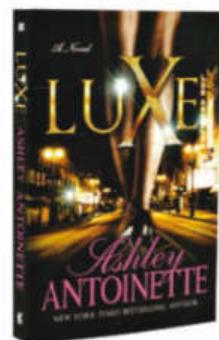
A former self-published urban fiction writer makes a leap to the mainstream with a new novel

Ashley Coleman isn't your typical suburban working mom. Together with husband JaQuavis, the Flint, Michigan, native has published more than 50 books that are not for the faint of heart. As "Ashley and JaQuavis," the duo has built a mini empire on jaw-dropping stories of sex, violence and blood money.

The missus, however, has branched out. Three years ago she snagged a deal with VH1 to pen novellas based on plotlines from *Single Ladies*, the network's lamented series. Recently, writing as Ashley Antoinette, she released **Luxe** (St. Martin's Griffin, \$14.99). The fast-paced tale focuses on Bleu Montclair, a fearless young girl determined to overcome her dysfunctional past.

Working her way through school, Bleu becomes valedictorian and escapes her small-city surroundings after receiving a partial scholarship to UCLA. Our anti-heroine's dreams are within reach—or so it seems. The street-smart Bleu moves to L.A. and quickly falls for the town's glitter-and-gold lifestyle. Faced with the temptation to make easy cash to support her new "luxe" life, Bleu finds herself in over her head when she gets caught up with an unsavory cartel, with whom every day is a life-or-death struggle. Literally.

Antoinette clearly had predecessors in the urban fiction genre, which was fueled, in large part, by Sister Souljah's 1999 breakthrough, *The Cold-Est Winter Ever* (Pocket).



Mother, wife and urban fiction author **Ashley Antoinette**

Along the way the category attracted multifaceted authors such as pioneer Teri Woods (whose self-published *True to the Game* remained on the ESSENCE Best Sellers List for more than a year), entrepreneur and fellow Michigan native Vickie M. Stringer, Nikki Turner and Wahida Clark.

Unlike these authors who flew solo, Antoinette has worked with her partner and husband. *Luxe* proves she has wings of her own.

She skillfully develops Bleu, so don't be surprised if one minute you love the character and by the next page you're screaming at her poor choices, which include infidelity and criminal activity.

Caution: You may want to have a bromide on hand for the second half of the book, which will leave you breathless. It's that intense. Will Bleu live or will she die? That you will care at all is credit to the author's addictive storytelling.

With this effort Antoinette continues to grow as a scribe chronicling the harsh realities of life in urban communities, where any day could be your last.

—Rorna Richards Dinnoo



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10 THINGS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

BY TAYLOR LEWIS

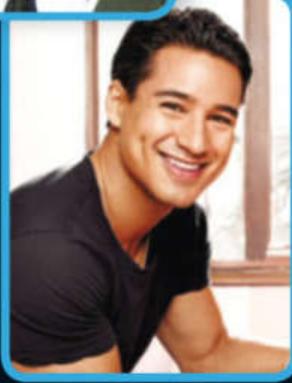
1

SWEARING IN

In 2010, Jasmine Twitty was fresh out of college and beginning her first job as a clerk at the 24-hour court in Greenville, South Carolina. Five years later, the 25-year-old has parlayed the skills that she gained in that time to make history: On August 22, Twitty was appointed associate judge in Easley, South Carolina, making her the youngest judge in the city. The political prodigy talked to ESSENCE about her historic appointment and what holding a high-powered position at such a young age means to her.

ISSUES

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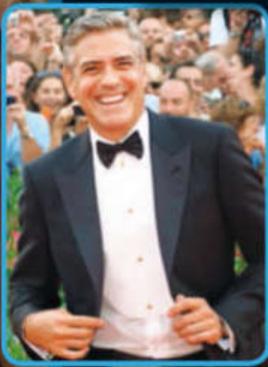
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ISSUES : TRENDING TOPICS

ESSENCE: What motivated you to go for such a big role?

JASMINE TWITTY: Having studied the court system prior to my college graduation, receiving a degree in political science and then actually being employed in that field made me realize that becoming a judge was attainable. I believe that being intentional is everything.

ESSENCE: Is there a learning curve?

J.T.: I knew that I had gained a lot working at the Greenville 24-hour court, but I didn't realize how much I had absorbed just from being in that environment for so long.

I've always felt it was important to learn more than what was required, so I've inquired about things that piqued my interest. If a new law was issued, I would ask, "Well, why do you think this changed and how does this affect us?" I always want to know why just to gain an understanding, and that really prepared me for this job.

ESSENCE: How do you stay confident when surrounded by people who are much more senior than you?

J.T.: I've always been the youngest of my friends and in my class, and my career has not been an exception. I try my best not to let my confidence waver because I realize that I can learn from others. Though no one has directly commented on my age, if someone did, I would remember that I am in control of Jasmine. I think, naturally, we all have to remind ourselves sometimes that we're capable of doing what we set out to do.

ESSENCE: Who do you look to for inspiration?

J.T.: I always say I want to be just like my three younger siblings [ages 24, 23 and 13] when I grow up. They challenge me, educate me, hold me to a higher standard.

ESSENCE: What advice would you give young women pursuing careers?

J.T.: Learn more than what is required. Make the sacrifices that others are not willing to make at your age so that you can excel in your career—I definitely made sacrifices working nights, weekends and holidays. Never underestimate the importance of a quality education and networking. Believe in yourself so that others will, too. Never take your talent for granted.



2

A SIMPLE APPROACH

When you donate money to a cause, shouldn't it go directly to the recipient? That's one nonprofit's mission. GiveDirectly, an organization that helps those in need, just received a **\$25 million grant that will go toward supporting impoverished families in Kenya and Uganda**. Each family will be receiving \$1,000 in cash from the organization to use however they choose, no strings attached.

3

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Ten years ago, only 12 of the 32 high school students in Baldwin, Michigan, a city that is nearly 20 percent African-American, went on to college. Now, **every high school senior receives a \$5,000 scholarship** funded by community donations. Last year, almost every student who graduated went on to college.

4

POWER SHIFT

In August, California became the first state to **ban the use of grand juries in police-related death cases**. State prosecutors will now have the power to charge an officer with a crime if they see fit in these instances.

5

GEARING UP FOR 2016

Youth Outreach Adolescent Community Awareness Program, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit, received a \$250,000 grant to **train local barbers to distribute election information** and resources to their clients.



6

CITY REJUVENATION

Detroit natives Paige Watkins, 22, and Camille Jones, 25, want to **rebuild a historic district**. They formed Black Bottom, LLC, which gathers community organizers, artists and writers together to restore the once-vibrant Black Bottom area.



TRANS LIVES MATTER

This year (as of September), some **20 transgender women have been killed**—14 of them have been Black, including India Clarke, pictured here. The founders of Black Lives Matter hosted various rallies and demonstrations in August to bring attention to these deaths and to remind everyone that Black trans lives matter.



8

A BROTHERHOOD OF TEACHERS

Teach for America has partnered with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., in a push to **increase the number of Black male educators in schools**. For the first time in history, students of color make up the majority of kids in American schools, but Black men only account for 2 percent of the nation's K-12 teachers. The newfound partnership will actively recruit Black men, ultimately diversifying the classroom.

9

A WIN FOR WORKPLACE EQUALITY

California women have one less obstacle on the path to equal pay. The state legislature passed a bill that would make it **difficult for workplaces to pay men more than women** for "substantially similar" work. The law will also protect women from facing repercussions for demanding equal pay.

“Women survivors of violence are expected neither to be seen nor heard, and the pressure increases when it involves celebrities.... Survivors have a right and an obligation to speak up (#NoSilenceOnDomestic Violence). We are too loud, too correct, too numerous to be ignored.”

—Journalist Dee Barnes, in an essay on gawker.com following Dr. Dre's apology for his past physical abuse.



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ISSUES : YOUNG PHENOMENON



Symone Sanders
is the force behind
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CAMPAIN COMMANDER

MEET THE YOUNG WOMAN IN CHARGE OF GETTING BERNIE SANDERS'S PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE OUT IN FRONT OF AMERICA

BY ZERLINA MAXWELL

When her appointment was announced in August, Symone Sanders, 25, seemed like a surprise addition to Senator Bernie Sanders's 2016 presidential campaign. ESSENCE spoke with the Vermont senator's national press director to find out why she thinks he is the best candidate to address the issues that impact Black women.

ESSENCE: Why did you want to get involved with Bernie Sanders's campaign?

SYMONE SANDERS: I've always loved politics, so when I moved to D.C. in November 2014, I said, "I'm going to go work on a 2016 presidential race." When Senator Sanders announced, I jumped at the chance to be able to help get him elected. I was familiar with him, since I had worked most recently with his office on trade issues. He is a rock-star champion. The things that the senator talks about on the campaign trail, the stuff he's advocated for in Congress, these are life-and-death issues, things that I was talking about with my friends. This is like a dream job for me.

ESSENCE: What are some of those issues?

S.S.: Economic inequality is something I would definitely talk about with my friends—the fact that as a young person who went to school, got a great education, I get out and I still had to

“The senator would say that not only do women matter, Black women matter.”

work two, three jobs to be able to pay my bills because I'm underpaid. Things like racial justice—the fact that people of color, particularly Black people, are being gunned down in the streets across America. That's something that directly affects me.

ESSENCE: Black Lives Matter activists famously interrupted Sanders during his speech at the 2015 Netroots Nation political convention in July.

Did that influence your decision to join his team?

S.S.: I was already in conversations with the campaign prior to Netroots. The issues that [BLM activists] raised at Netroots are important, which is why we've made them staples of our campaign. We recently released a draft of our racial justice platform.

ESSENCE: Why is Bernie Sanders the best candidate for president?

S.S.: Because he cares. He is interested in truly making a difference. He's speaking to the concerns that everyday Americans have. Women, particularly, will benefit the most from expanding social security. Without social security, nearly half of elderly women would be living in poverty. Those are things women in the beauty shop are talking about, along with racial and criminal justice.

ESSENCE: What is the senator's message to Black women?

S.S.: I think the first thing the senator would say is not only do women matter, Black women matter. On the campaign trail, he not only cites the number for White women in fighting for pay equity, but he also cites the fact that African-American women earn just 64 cents for every dollar a White male earns.

ESSENCE: How are you managing the demanding hours and taking time for yourself?

S.S.: I work a pretty grueling schedule. Some days it's 7:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. Some days it's 6:00 A.M. to 12:30 A.M. I watch a lot of Netflix whenever I get a moment. *A Different World* is one of my favorite TV shows; I'm going back through the seasons. I try to do a little shopping when I can, but Netflix and Starbucks keep me going. □

Zerlina Maxwell is an ESSENCE contributor, political analyst, writer and TV commentator.



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Finance Your Dreams

GOT A BIG IDEA?
HERE'S HOW TO GET
MONEY FOR IT

BY JIHAN THOMPSON

Ask anyone and they'll tell you we're in the golden age of entrepreneurship. In fact, Black women-run businesses have grown by a whopping 67.5 percent between 2007 and 2012, according to the National Women's Business Council. Still many agree that minority-owned start-ups have the hardest time raising capital and Black women often fare the worst. But take heart: We've asked an expert and talked to real women who have raised six figures to find out how they did it—and how you can, too.

MONEY & POWER

WHAT POWER INVESTOR KESHA CASH WANTS YOU TO KNOW



In venture capital, there are few women and even fewer women of color. Kesha Cash, founder and general partner of Impact America Fund, wants more minority-run start-ups to get the money they deserve. "There are so many talented Black and brown folks with big visions, but they are disconnected from the resources and the network they need to thrive," says Cash. Her Black women-run firm is on a mission to close that gap. Here, Cash shares the tips every founder of color should follow.

1. MAKE SURE YOUR IDEA IS SCALABLE

1. There are two buzzwords you're apt to hear when dealing with investors: scalable and high-growth. What are they looking for? How quickly your small idea can become a multimillion-dollar cash cow. "If you are making your own clothing and willing to wholesale beyond your boutique, that's much more scalable than having one store," explains Cash. "Venture capital firms are oftentimes investing on behalf of clients—endowments, pensions, family offices—who are seeking outsize financial returns. That means most VCs are investing in companies with big scalable visions, the ability to disrupt an industry and the ability to achieve hundreds of millions or billion-dollar valuations in seven to ten years."

2. DREAM BIG—THEN DREAM A LITTLE BIGGER

"I'm always on the hunt for crazy, ambitious, I-can't-sleep-at-night passionate entrepreneurs who are trying to create significant change with their product or services," says Cash. So how do you convince people like Cash to hand over their money for your idea? Sell them on your dream—even if it sounds a little ridiculous. "Women are very good at being honest and focused on the here and now," says Cash. "But they often have a hard time projecting their billion-dollar vision and saying, 'Look, I'm here today, but my bigger vision five years from now is this.'"

3. NETWORK BEYOND YOUR NETWORK

Cash encourages entrepreneurs to move beyond their social circles if they want access to larger pots of money.

And she's honest about why: "The problem oftentimes in Black and brown communities is that we simply don't have people in our networks that can afford to just write us a \$50,000 check to play with." That's why Cash isn't shy about encouraging people to look elsewhere. "I want more entrepreneurs of color to be okay with stepping out of their comfort zone and connecting with people with similar passions," she says.

4. DO YOUR HOMEWORK

4. Overnight success stories sound great, and it's easy to get wistful with why-isn't-that-me envy. But don't believe the hype. Cash says she looks to invest in teams who have been in the trenches for a few years—those who have done the work, learned the market and are now ready to use her money to get to the next level. "I review lots of pitch decks that identify big market opportunities with interesting solutions, but it's glaringly clear when the team hasn't spent enough time testing out their product or service," says Cash. "The founder of Mayvenn, for example, had an import and sourcing agency before he got into the hair extension business. He had experience with import and export before his current venture took off."

5. BE READY TO QUIT YOUR DAY JOB

5. "Something we see that is an automatic no is when people are still working full-time jobs," says Cash. "They swear to us that they can do this on the side or at night and it's rarely possible. There may be some people who pull it off, but it's a real red flag because entrepreneurship is a full-time commitment."

6. GIVE UP SOME OWNERSHIP

6. Don't be stubborn. Owning 100 percent of O is, well, O. When you find the right investors that you believe can help you grow your business, be willing to give them an appropriate piece of equity, says Cash. "To build a big business, you'll need committed partners to help you create a larger pie that has significant value—and they should be rewarded accordingly." ▷

ROLL CALL LOOKING TO RAISE MONEY? A FEW NAMES WORTH KEEPING HANDY

Troy Carter (@atomfactory)

Carter founded entertainment management company Atom Factory, whose clients include people like John Legend. He's backed 27 companies, from Uber to Songza.

Lauren Maillian (@LaurenMaillian)

Maillian, founder and CEO of Luxury Market Branding, and investor in start-ups like Levo League, is a mentor for an upcoming pitch competition/reality show to air on Oxygen.

Lorine Pendleton (@LorinePendleton)

A lawyer by trade, Pendleton has been quietly making a name on the start-up circuit as an investor in women-led and minority-owned ventures.

Kanyi Maqubela (@km)

As a partner with venture capital firm The Collaborative Fund, Maqubela has invested in more than two dozen start-ups, including Hampton Creek and Walker & Company.



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WIN AT CROWDFUNDING

Venture capital isn't the only way to get money for your biz. If you want to get people—friends, family, strangers—to shell out cash to make your dream a reality, pick a crowdfunding platform that aligns with your goals. Here's a cheat sheet to four popular sites.

PLUM ALLEY

What it is: A platform geared specifically toward women entrepreneurs. Launched in 2013, it's helped women-led campaigns succeed at nearly twice the average rate of other sites.

Quick tip: In order for your campaign to be publicly advertised on the site, you have to reach 30 percent of your goal within the first week, so have confirmed backers lined up before you begin. Why 30 percent? Campaigns that raise that much in the first 48 hours are typically the most successful.

Fine print: Plum Alley has an all-or-nothing policy, so you must meet your goal to keep the funds. There's also a 5 percent charge on funds raised and a 2.9 percent credit card processing fee per pledge.

KICKSTARTER

What it is: As one of the first crowdfunding platforms to hit the Web in 2009, it's the most well-known.

Good for: Creatives looking to attract backers who aren't friends and family.

Quick tip: Make your backers feel special. While it's certainly not required, most crowdfunders offer gifts to those who pony up more money, so provide incentives like early access to your product.

Fine print: You only get the money you raise if you hit your goal. Come up short? You'll have to return the cash to donors. If your project is

successful, the company takes 5 percent of total funds raised. There's an additional 3 percent plus \$0.20 processing fee per pledge.

WEFUNDER

What it is: A platform that allows you to raise small funds from a range of different investors.

Good for: Founders looking for angel investors and willing to give away equity.

Quick tip: Instead of having to deal with a bunch of different investors, the site assigns an investment adviser—who will decide who gets to invest in your company so only the right backers come on board.

Fine print: Expect to pay administrative fees between \$1,000 and \$3,000 once you're successfully funded.

INDIEGOGO

What it is: A platform similar to Kickstarter that allows you to raise money for just about any project.

Good for: Anyone who doesn't want to give up the money they raise if they don't reach their goal. Unlike most crowdfunding sites, Indiegogo offers "flexible funding," so whatever you raise is yours to keep.

Fine print: With their flexible funding platform, you'll hand over the standard 5 percent fee of total funds raised, plus third-party processing fees (at least 3 percent plus \$0.30 per pledge).

FIND YOUR PERFECT MATCH

Many founders agree that it's not just about who writes the check. You want investors who can also be mentors, but that means you need someone with expertise in your industry. Online directories like Crunchbase (crunchbase.com) and AngelList (angel.co) curate databases of which companies investors have backed so you can see if they're a good fit for you.

"HOW WE DID IT"

Three moneymaking entrepreneurs on how they got those first checks signed



TANYA VAN COURT

Founder of iSow, an online financial planning tool for children

Raised: \$300,000

Years in Business: 1

"Humble yourself and be willing to ask for help," says Van Court. During a panel on entrepreneurship at a Stanford National Black Alumni Association conference, she says "I stood up from the audience and said I was looking for investors. I was surprised how many people were interested—I received more than half of what I've raised just from that first pitch."



NICOLE SANCHEZ

Founder of Vixenn, a direct-to-stylist hair extensions company

Raised: \$500,000+

Years in Business: 3

"Ask for advice before you ask for money. That was the biggest key for me. The person who became my lead investor and who wrote my first \$250,000 check was someone I knew for more than a year. We met every two weeks for three months before he presented me with a challenge: He'd invest \$250,000 if I was able to raise \$250,000 from other sources. It took four months; I was relentless, worked all my connections, asked for help and came up with the money. He was in."



JEWEL BURKS

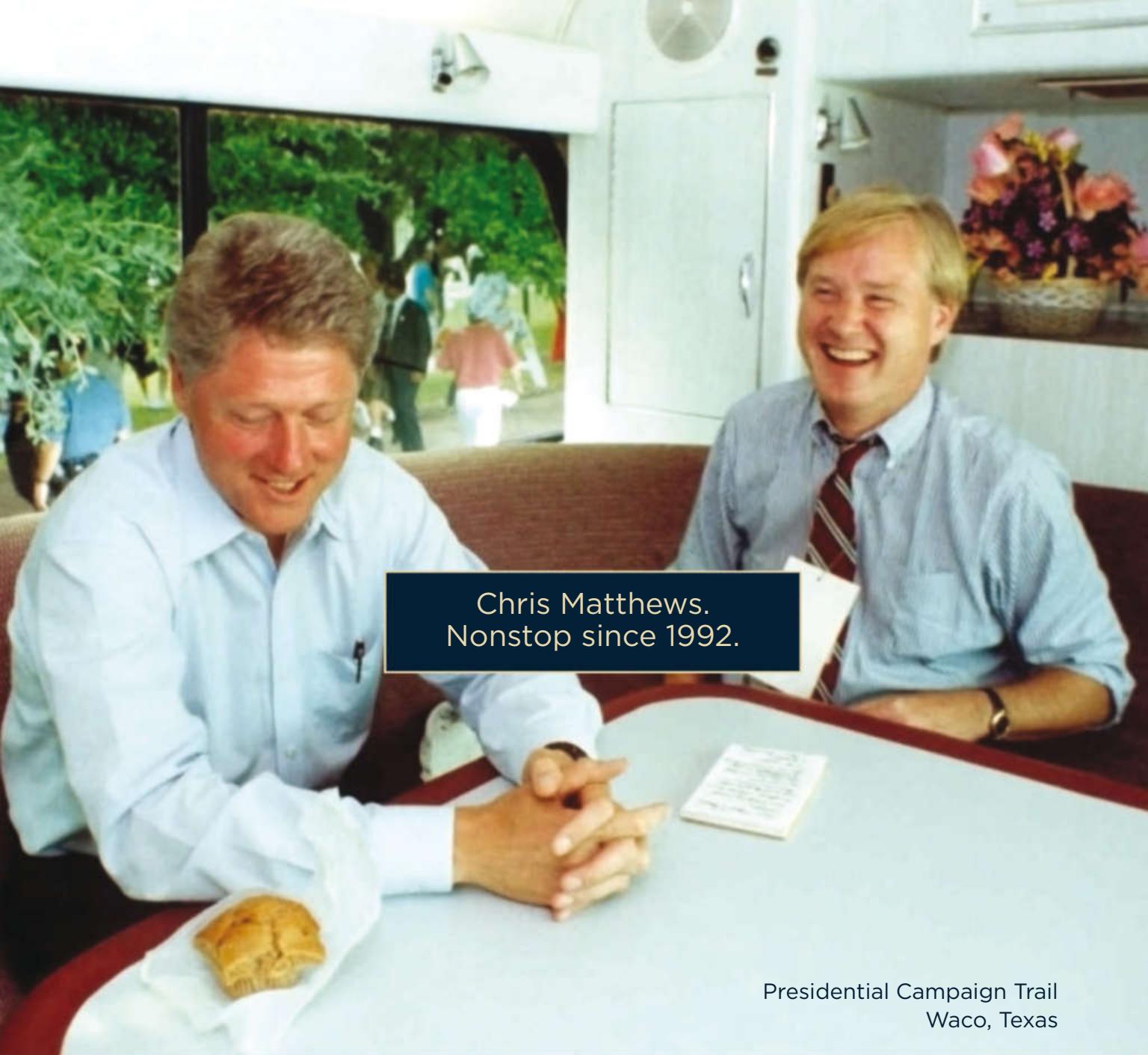
Cofounder of Partpic, a visual recognition software company

Raised: \$1.5 million

Years in Business: 2

Over eight months, Burks met with more than 100 investors to sell them on her dream. She did her homework: "It's important to know whom you're pitching and understand the things that are going to move them. Some investors were interested in how the technology worked. Others were interested in my experience. I figured out what was going to be effective to close the deal."

Jihan Thompson is an editor and writer in Brooklyn.



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Happiness
at the office is
not as hard
to achieve
as you
may think.

HOW TO BE HAPPY AT WORK

TAP INTO THESE SECRETS FROM SUCCESSFUL WOMEN TO BOOST WORKPLACE SATISFACTION

BY GINA ROBERTS-GREY

We often measure success in our careers by the size of our paychecks. But Stacia Pierce, job expert and host of the annual International Women's Success Conference, says being happy at work is the true measure of success. "Money will not necessarily lead to happiness. But happiness can absolutely lead to making more money, as well as feeling fulfilled and confident at work no matter the scenario," she says.

Patricia Simon, Ph.D., an associate research scientist at Yale University School of Medicine, agrees that workplace contentment is a powerful tool for promoting career success. "When you're happy, you're usually more productive," Simon says. "Happiness increases sales, performance and so on. You're also better at taking in information when you're happy, which gives you an on-the-job advantage."

Just 27 percent of Black women plan to stay with their current employer, says a recent survey from the Working Mother Research Institute. So how do you break out of the doldrums and increase your satisfaction? Follow these tips:

DON'T TOLERATE COMPLAINTS

"We work in a no-complaining zone," says Pierce. Instead of seeing obstacles, she and her team see opportunities to

“Just 27 percent of Black women plan to stay with their current employer.”

explore new paths. "Our zero tolerance for complaints and 100 percent commitment to thinking every problem is potential to learn keep the energy high and everyone in a good mood."

GIVE BACK

Corporate responsibility and social engagement are things three out of four women of color rank as important to workplace enjoyment. "I'm driven by wanting to be a professional and to be able to stand up for those I grew up with who were marginalized," says Areva Martin, 44, a partner at Martin & Martin, LLP, in Los Angeles and the head of the Special Needs Network. If your company doesn't already have a corporate mission, suggest your team partake in group volunteerism for Habitat for Humanity or the American Red Cross.

ENVISION SUCCESS

It's easy to get caught up in everyday minutiae and lose sight of the big picture. But Pierce has found that taking a break from the clutter in her mind helps her maintain perspective: "I meditate and use this time to cultivate new ideas and find solutions to my problems, even before my day starts."

BE AUTHENTIC

The happiest Black women are those who feel they can be their true selves at work, according to the survey. That can range from being able to embrace your natural curls instead of having to wear your hair straight to fit in to communicating with coworkers in the same way you would with someone outside your organization.

TAKE A BREAK

Just because you're a superwoman doesn't mean you have to function like one 24/7. To preserve inner peace and career harmony, follow in the footsteps of Hattie Hill, president and CEO of Women's Foodservice Forum, the largest national organization focused on the advancement of women in the food-service industry. "I find a quiet place to recharge, like my office or my car, before heading to a meeting," she says.

REMAIN IN THE MOMENT

Instead of spending time stewing about your boss's bad mood yesterday or next week's meeting, Simon suggests looking at the here and now. "Too much time spent thinking about the past can contribute to workplace anxiety," she says. To focus on the present, keep a running list of sources of pleasure during the workday, whether it's a coworker holding open a door on your way into the building or receiving an unexpected accolade. □

Gina Roberts-Grey frequently covers health and wellness for ESSENCE.

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MONEY, POWER & RESPECT

TARAJI P. HENSON'S FIRECRACKER ROLE AS COOKIE ON *EMPIRE* HAS BROUGHT HER A FLOOD OF NEW FANS. AS SHE MOVES THROUGH HER NEWFOUND FAME, THE EMMY-NOMINATED ACTRESS REFLECTS ON HER STOP-AND-GO MOMENTS IN HOLLYWOOD AND WHY HER CURRENT TV REIGN IS RIGHT ON TIME

BY ADRIENNE SAMUELS GIBBS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DENNIS LEUPOLD | STYLING BY JASON REMBERT





BABY, YOU CAN DRIVE MY CAR

Opening spread: Taraji wears a **Lanvin** coat and belt, **Lorraine Schwartz** black cushion and white diamond ring and **Vera Wang Collection** booties.

This page: On Taraji: a **Mugler** dress and **Lorraine Schwartz** black diamond mesh necklace and cuff.

Opposite page: She wears a **Naeem Khan** silk faille cape and sequin jumpsuit, **Lorraine Schwartz** earrings and **Giuseppe Zanotti** heels.

BEAUTY NOTE

Keep a fierce kisser like Taraji's with **Dior** Addict Fluid Stick in Whisper Beige.

Every photoshoot has a boob moment. When it happens, some lose composure. Others lean in. Taraji P. Henson, apparently, is a leaner. When Chicago's signature breeze swoops down on her while she poses before a Dauphin helicopter at a swanky helipad, the star welcomes the wind. She chastely pulls the fabric of the Valentino tulle dress close, and as an L train rumbles by, she runs to the photographer. Taraji wants to see the "moment." The untouched image will likely never appear in a magazine but it's pure art paired with amazingly beautiful cleavage illuminated by the setting sun. She quickly contemplates the photo as her team huddles. Then, the moment is gone. It's time to finish the shoot. Taraji hustles back to her mark, hollers "We 'bout to lose the sun. Let's finish the shots. Oh, by the way, titty bop is hot!"

That's how it is with Taraji. She's Hollywood yet gully. She's petite yet makes up for it with a big voice and an even bigger personality. With her 'hood-to-riches backstory, she's proof that the American Dream can become reality. Plus, only Taraji can put on a Mugler body-conscious dress, strut out to the black-and-white Maserati sitting on set, take a handful of smoky-sexy pictures and have nearly everyone forget that she's still rocking the white slippers she took from the "Chump," er Trump, Hotel. (Her words, obviously.)

That's why we like her. She's not only a classically trained actor with Oscar and Emmy nominations under her belt, but she's also like the rest of us (or at least like one of our cousins): a single mother of a college-age son, graduate of a historically Black university, a kick-ass spades player and a blue crab devotee. We identify with her—and all her characters. Yvette. Shug. Queenie. That's why we're excited the world is having a Taraji moment.

Now they—and we—know her as Cookie Lyon, the beast-mode mama bear of *Empire*. And, due in part to the global success of Cookie and her show, Black TV is popular again. Taraji has covered *W* and *Glamour*, and been featured on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. We're not mad, but bless their hearts, our sweet homegirl has officially been Columbused. As Taraji said last April as host of *Saturday Night Live*: "White people finally know who I am!"

About damn time.

"Let's keep it real," says Jussie Smollett, who portrays Cookie's son Jamal on *Empire*. "Honestly you're just discovering her? Taraji has been a leading lady since the beginning. She's never turned out a performance that was less than captivating. It's just all cultures and all races and everybody

is being hip to her now because this is such a broad project."

The forever D.C. girl takes it all in stride. "I'm just gonna keep amassing an audience," says Taraji, her voice hoarse yet happily tired after a weekend celebrating her forty-fifth birthday and prepping for an Apple Music commercial and a Hulu ad. "Everything was strategically planned. This is what all my efforts are for."

By the way, she wants those "efforts" to move us all beyond Black and White TV. She hopes *Empire* and her performance in it will motivate entertainment's bigwigs to stick with what works as opposed to what's pop. "Remember when it was *Martin* and a couple shows on the UPN network and all of sudden they went away and now it's all *The CW*?" she asks. "What I hope they get this time is that it's not Black or White. It's just good material."

And that's why Cookie is a keeper. She's a dynamic character based upon real-life people Taraji knows. And Taraji is so good at being Cookie that even her old movies are resurfacing.

"Even though people are just now finding me as Cookie, thank God for Netflix because people are so moved by my performance they're like, 'Where has she been?'" she says. "I've always said I want to do the type of work that people study."

Serious Business

Taraji is an actor's actor. She went to school for it. From Constantin Stanislavski to Sanford Meisner, she studied the various masters with their different methods. She's had several acting coaches even outside of her Howard University (HU) school of drama training. Yet former HU professor and current acting coach to ▷



“Everything was strategically planned. This is what all my efforts are for.”

I was always good and had personality and could make people laugh but my coaches would force me to go deeper.

many stars, Vera Katz, remembers Taraji as a student with expressive eyes and raw talent. Katz talks a lot about how Taraji acts without talking; how with a flicker of her eyes and set of her jaws, she can influence an entire scene. The professor, like most true acting teachers, taught students to dig deeper, to consider “the moment before”—an acting term that asks the performer to truly believe that an event actually, really happened as opposed to simply reading the event off a sheet of paper.

“I hate to see actors who dry cry or actors who don’t use props,” Taraji says, giving a mini acting lesson and a peek into how Cookie comes to life. “Nothing bugs me more than that. Most humans don’t want you to see them cry, so if anything, you’re fighting the tears. That’s where you get people in the gut.... I was always good and had personality and could make people laugh but my coaches would force me to go deeper. ‘What did that person say to you? Where is your moment before? Where are you coming from when you come to the door?’”

Ticking off a long list of coaches she’s worked with, Taraji even flirts with the idea of creating an acting school. While she talks her voice creaks with exhaustion, but her intonation rises as she discusses what young thespians need the most.

“You know how Debbie Allen has her dance academy? We don’t have that anymore. The Meisner technique? We don’t have [a focus on] that anymore. These kids are thinking they can do reality TV and come and do this craft that I studied, sweated and grinded. People forget it’s a craft because it’s so pop now. [The whole] ‘it’s so fun to play so and so in a movie because they have so many followers on Twitter...’ F that. Can they make me believe the words coming out their mouth?”

One young actor is paying attention, costar Bryshere “Yazz” Gray. “I used to watch Taraji all the time as a kid,” he says between takes on the show’s massive West Side of Chicago set. “She acts just like my real mama. [She and Terrence] are the best acting coaches to have. I’m learning from them daily.”

Empire cocreator Lee Daniels says he closed auditions after Taraji came to the scene (“It was a wrap”) and he has witnessed firsthand how the younger actors observe her. Her performance is so strong, he’s considering a Cookie spin-off in a few years.

“Taraji came in with that cheap fur coat on, some heels and a \$2 dress she must have picked up off the rack in Harlem somewhere,” says Daniels, remembering the audition. “I couldn’t believe it. She’s over-the-top. She’s able to go into the places of discomfort that most actresses wouldn’t go. Cookie was finding her class and Taraji had no problem doing it.”

The *Empire* crew is working 18-hour days to push out an increased number of episodes this season (not to mention the pressure of staying America’s number one-watched show). But those back-to-back days, plus her red-hot celebrity requests, take everything out of her. Taraji has worked so hard that she had to check into the hospital this past summer for exhaustion.

She’s obviously recovered, but she wouldn’t have had it any other way. To help keep things in balance, she recently completed a 21-day raw cleanse. Even for the ESSENCE shoot, she kicked it off with a chunky green juice that made her pucker. Taraji chugged it straight down and somehow managed to ignore the Harold’s fried chicken, catfish and fries that sat on set for the rest of the staff. She hasn’t lost weight on the cleanse, but has lost inches—which is nice given that her designer of choice for the moment is Alexander Wang, who dressed her for the Emmys.

She’s so into the clean eating thing that she might give up chicken. Chicken! Wait. Hold fast. She rephrases lest someone tweet a picture of her gnawing on a bone. “If,” she says cautiously, “one day I get the urge to go to Popeyes and get me a two-piece with a biscuit, I’m going to do it.”

That Moment Before

Prior to becoming an A-lister, Taraji was a college student with a baby. She’s faced her share of troubles, like the murder of her son’s father. It was her own dad who encouraged her to move west and since arriving in Hollywood, Taraji’s never looked back.

“Time has gone by so fast,” she says. “I have a grown son. Most of my friends are just getting started. I’m like, ‘Girl, talk to me when he’s a teenager’ and ‘Girl, been there and done that.’” But her doctor did bring up the topic of having more babies in the near future. She vetoed that suggestion.

“At 45, What I’m doing? That baby would come out looking like Benjamin Button! He said I had a lot of eggs left. He was all happy like he was giving me good news. He was like, ‘Do you want to have any more? You have plenty of eggs.’ I said, ‘Do you want them because I’m done. Done.’ I’m not starting over with a grown son. I couldn’t imagine doing it at this age. My career wouldn’t allow for it.”

Before *Empire*, Taraji’s last megahit was 2008’s *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. That’s when she was nominated for an Oscar. At the time everyone said the Brad Pitt flick would boost her career to the stratosphere. It didn’t.

And it was cool. There were lots of independent films, TV shows and some theater. She killed it as the female lead on CBS’ *Person of Interest*. Things clearly worked out anyway. “I’m satisfied with this path because I was clear,” she says. “I didn’t compare myself to people. People said, ‘This is gonna change everything for you.’ I’m glad I didn’t believe that hype. I never got caught up in that stuff. I just stayed the course and worked hard and every role I did, I put my everything into it.” Taraji continues: “Everything that I did got me here, and I wouldn’t change it or trade it for the world.” □



Adrienne Samuels Gibbs (@adriennewrites) is an award-winning, Chicago-based writer. She’s written for *Ebony*, *The Boston Herald* and *Miami Herald*.

A full-page photograph of Taraji P. Henson standing on the steps of a private jet. She is wearing a voluminous, red, ribbed wool cape and matching dress. Her hair is styled in a sleek bob, and she is wearing large, dangling earrings. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The jet behind her has "EXIT" signs above the door and "HELICOPTER" printed on the side.

EXIT

HELICOPTER

TOP FLIGHT

On Taraji: **Salvatore Ferragamo** ribbed wool cape and dress, **Lorraine Schwartz** earrings and **Christian Louboutin** pumps.

Hair, Cesar Ramirez for Mizani/crowdmgmt.com. **Makeup**, Ashunta Sheriff using Dior Beauty/ken barboza.com. **Manicure**, Ericka Johnson.

For clothing details,
see Where to Buy.



Secrets to a stellar Career

FORGET ABOUT THE GLASS CEILING.
THESE CAREER ROCK STARS PROVE THAT
PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS IS WITHIN YOUR GRASP

BY TAMARA E. HOLMES

When a Black woman discovers her calling, her mantra is often “Dream big or go home.” Ninety-one percent of us say we are ambitious, and we are more likely than White women to desire a powerful position and prestigious title, according to a recent Center for Talent Innovation study. But many of us are living a dream deferred, with 44 percent of Black women feeling stalled in our careers. Get a jump start by learning new skills, making yourself more visible or even changing lanes completely. We asked five career superstars to share their proven strategies for getting ahead.

The Rising Star

SOMARA THEODORE

Anyone who thinks millennials have to spend years paying their dues hasn't met Somara Theodore. After graduating from Penn State in 2013 with a degree in meteorology, the 25-year-old became the weekend meteorologist at WJCL, Savannah's ABC affiliate. Today her early-morning forecasts are seen by up to 1.4 million viewers on Cleveland's ABC affiliate, WEWS, and her radio spots are heard by Cleveland-area listeners of the Tom Joyner and Rickey Smiley morning shows.



TO SPARK HER METEORIC RISE: SHE REACHED OUT TO MENTORS.

Theodore sought guidance from Janice Huff, chief meteorologist for WNBC in New York City. “You might get a rejection,” Theodore says, “but you have to cast your net wide.”

SHE SACRIFICED COMFORT.

Internships in television meteorology are typically unpaid positions, but Theodore applied for spots in several cities. “I was going to sleep on [family members’ couches] and do their dishes, but I would have an internship,” she says.

SHE DID DOUBLE THE WORK.

After winning an internship for the CBS affiliate in Atlanta, Theodore was offered another by *The Weather Channel*. “You usually do one internship over the course of the summer,” she says, but she didn’t see the sense in turning one down. So she took on both.

The Master of Reinvention

STACY BROWN-PHILPOT

Some people stay in one career all their lives. Stacy Brown-Philpot is not one of them. After making a name for herself as a senior associate at PricewaterhouseCoopers and then working as a senior analyst with Goldman Sachs, 40-year-old Brown-Philpot set her sights on technology. She climbed the ranks at Google, leading global operations for the development of such products as Chrome, Search and Google+. In the process she founded the Black Googler Network, an initiative to increase diversity in technology. Today she’s the chief operating officer at TaskRabbit, a Web site that connects consumers needing chores done with people in their neighborhood who can do them.



TO CONQUER THE TECH WORLD: SHE VEERED OFF THE BEATEN PATH.

Though she was on track to become a partner at an accounting firm, Brown-Philpot started anew and went to Stanford Graduate School of Business. Once she finished, she sought a financial analyst job at Google. The company was happy to get a proven financial professional, and in return “I could learn about technology and how tech companies were run,” she says.

SHE VOLUNTEERED TO DO HER MANAGER’S WORK.

“I would go to my boss and say, ‘Hey, what are you working on,’ ” she recalls. Once he told her, she would ask if she could take the task off his hands, proving that she could handle more responsibility.

SHE TOOK AN INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENT.

Brown-Philpot moved to India for a year to lead a global team, even though it meant putting off having children and leaving her husband, Chris, behind. The two made the decision together, she says. “It was a bet that I made that my marriage was strong enough to sustain this experience.” Her bet paid off and today the couple have two daughters. ▶



The Seasoned Strategist

KARLA MARTIN

Some people view their careers as a destination, but Karla Martin always saw hers as a journey. That meant she had a general idea of where she wanted to go but remained "extremely flexible to opportunity," she says. She started as a litigating attorney, then moved to consulting, where she became a partner at Booz Allen Hamilton. Not one to rest on her laurels, Martin shifted direction to become director of global business strategy at Google, where she was responsible for overseeing key initiatives. Being flexible also allowed the mom of Sophia, 16, Carol, 11, and Marty, 9, to manage motherhood along with a soaring career.

TO ENSURE SUCCESS AT EACH STEP ON HER JOURNEY: SHE SOUGHT OUT SPONSORS.

Mentors may give good advice, but sponsors agree to advocate for you in the C-suite. Martin asked her boss at Google to recommend her for opportunities that might suit her. Unless we ask, "women in particular can sometimes find ourselves overly mentored and under-sponsored," she says.

SHE BUILT A POWERFUL INNER CIRCLE.

Whenever Martin wanted to learn how to do something, she found a personal adviser who knew how to do it. For example, when she wanted to be on a board, "I was talking to people who are on publicly traded boards," she says. By having a Rolodex of contacts at higher levels, she gained access to wisdom to guide her next steps.

SHE SPOKE UP ABOUT HER DESIRED TRAJECTORY.

Some women keep their aspirations a secret, but when Martin took a marketing position she let her managers know that it wasn't her end goal; she ultimately wanted to work directly with clients. When the time came for her to apply for a position on the client side, "it wasn't a big fight," she says.

The Music Mogul

ETHIOPIA HABTEMARIAM

When a LaFace Records employee spoke to Ethiopia Habtemariam's high school class two decades ago, the then 14-year-old asked if she could shadow the executive for a day. That connection developed into an internship and started Habtemariam's ascent to the upper echelons of the music

industry. A stint at Universal Music Publishing as a creative manager led to a series of promotions and today the 36-year-old runs two of the company's divisions, serving as president of urban music at Universal Music Publishing Group and president of Motown Records. In those roles, she has signed such songwriters and artists as Chris Brown, J. Cole and Miguel.

TO CHART HER PATH TO EXCELLENCE: SHE MASTERED EVERY JOB.

Instead of thinking about what her next promotion would be, Habtemariam treated each role as if it were the most important position she could take. When she worked as a part-time assistant for LaFace Records, a senior-level executive "noticed how professional I was when I would answer the phone and how on point I was when it came to assisting my boss," she recalls. That good impression led the executive to eventually offer Habtemariam a job at Universal. "You never know who's watching."

SHE FOCUSED ON "WE" RATHER THAN "I."

Habtemariam learned early on that teamwork is paramount to success. To keep everyone on her team motivated, she lets them know their contributions are valued by holding creative brainstorming meetings every two weeks where everyone from the assistants to the top executives discuss current projects. "We give everyone an opportunity to offer their opinion and talk through ideas, because we're invested in this together."

SHE UNDERSTOOD THE VALUE OF PASSION.

The way Habtemariam sees it, being good at something will only take you so far. "I believe that you get the best out of people when they are operating from something that they actually believe in," she says. Her love of music and its power to connect people has given her the strength to withstand setbacks and the inspiration to put in the long hours and dedication needed to do the job. "I've only said yes when it felt right for me and also felt like I had a purpose and an understanding of what I could contribute."



The Connector

JILL BISHOP

During any given month, global education strategist and development consultant Jill Bishop's calendar reads like an ancient sub-Saharan trade route. From late May to June, the 48-year-old attended the presidential inauguration of Muhammadu Buhari in Nigeria, mentored a group of girls at the International School Moshi in Tanzania and laid the groundwork for a potential American business partnership in Kenya. Her passion for implementing education and technology solutions in Africa, where she spends half of her time, makes the jet lag worthwhile.



TO CREATE THE EXACT JOB SHE WANTED: SHE FOLLOWED HER CALLING.

"I think we all have callings and mine is Africa and developing economies. It's what I was built to do: merging business, economic development, capacity building and philanthropy. I have a heart for serving the people of Africa," Bishop says. To many African politicos and agencies, she's a trusted broker for implementing changes in education and information technology.

SHE NEVER STOPPED LEARNING.

Bishop, who holds a TRIUM Global Executive M.B.A. from the London School of Economics and Political Science; the HEC School of Management, Paris; and the New York University Stern School of Business, is a firm believer in staying on top of what's going on in the world. "You have to do your research," says Bishop, who splits her time between Washington, D.C., New York City and Atlanta when she's not overseas. "You cannot walk into a country and not know what's going on. I have to know about the economy, the policy; I keep up on the news, I have to know who's who, the people, the political structure, when the elections are, who's running, what the platforms are. You have to be smart."

SHE KNOWS HER END GOAL.

For Bishop, the fluidity of her work in Africa is underscored by another passion: exposing Black Americans to the continent beyond what's often reported about it. She says, "In my small attempt to change the prevailing stereotype of Africa being dominated by [the] poor, rife with illness and having unappetizing food, I try to present individuals who are able to influence large groups of followers to another side of Africa that I know and love." Last year, she arranged East Africa experiential tours with celebrities such as Ludacris and David Banner. —Cori Murray

5 WAYS TO STAND OUT IN A JOB INTERVIEW

The interview is the final barrier keeping you from the job you want. **Tameika L. Pope**, chief human capital officer for the Board of Governors of the U.S. Federal Reserve System, shares how to ace it

1 SHOW RATHER THAN TELL.

One way Pope has differentiated herself when she vied for jobs is by taking a portfolio to interviews that contains examples of past accomplishments. "I will take samples of demonstrated work that I've done so that while I'm speaking about it in the interview, I can pass it around."



2 DON'T OVERLOOK SUPPORTING STAFF.

Many people come to an interview only thinking about impressing the interviewer, but "if you're coming to interview for a job with me, I ask the receptionist how you treated her, I ask my assistant how you talked to her and I ask the people who may have encountered you at the security desk," Pope says. "They know me, they know the organization, they're very helpful when it comes to determining fit."

3 BE PREPARED WITH QUESTIONS.

An interview is a two-way street. Not only do you want to make sure the job is a good match for you, but by coming prepared with at least two insightful questions, "it demonstrates to the hiring manager that you are thoughtful and invested," Pope says.

4 PLAY UP YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS.

"No one walks into any job having 100 percent of the requirements," says Pope. But if you can do about 80 percent of what's needed for the post, be able to explain how you'll learn the rest. That might mean pointing to previous examples of how you've identified resources and mastered new skills.

5 DO THE RIGHT HOMEWORK.

Of course you should research the companies you interview with, but don't just spout off statistics. Instead, read the mission statement and the company's most recently disclosed plans and explain how you can contribute. For example, mention the goals the CEO gave in his latest speech and say "Here's how I think I can add value," Pope says. □

Tamara E. Holmes is a writer based in Washington, D.C.
Cori Murray is the entertainment director at ESSENCE.



WOMEN OF THE WHITE HOUSE

MEET THE DYNAMIC BLACK WOMEN RESPONSIBLE
FOR KEEPING PRESIDENT OBAMA'S
ADMINISTRATION RUNNING

BY TAYLOR LEWIS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KWAKU ALSTON



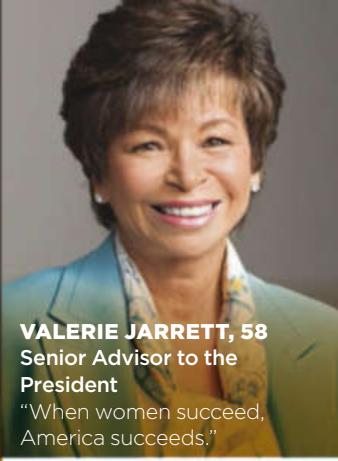


The ladies were photographed exclusively for ESSENCE, September 4, 2015, in the Indian Treaty Room of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. ▷

**LORETTA LYNCH, 56**

U.S. Attorney General

"I want to protect the most vulnerable members of our society and make sure everyone has a voice."

**VALERIE JARRETT, 58**

Senior Advisor to the President

"When women succeed, America succeeds."

**SUSAN RICE, 51**

National Security Advisor

"My parents always taught me to work hard and to never give a halfhearted performance."

**DEESHA DYER, 37**

Special Assistant to the

President & Social Secretary

"Always be yourself. It sounds cliché, but as you get older, it becomes clear what being yourself truly means."

**ASHLEY ALLISON, 33**

Deputy Director of the Office of Public Engagement

"The most inspiring moments come in times of quiet reflection on my walk to and from work."

**ASHLEY ETIENNE, 37**

Special Assistant to the President & Cabinet Communications Director

"Truth will prevail regardless of the opposition and enormity of the challenge."

**ASHLEY TATE-GILMORE, 32**

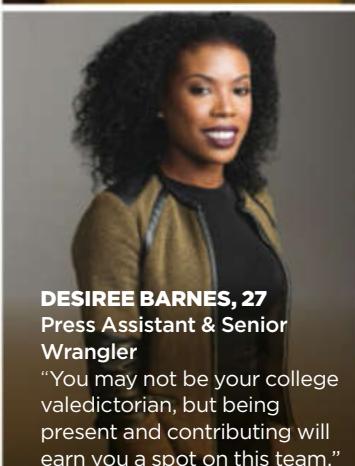
Director, White House Travel Office

"I have the chance to connect with Americans overseas who are real-life examples of the work we're doing."

**ADAEZE ENEKWECHI, 37**

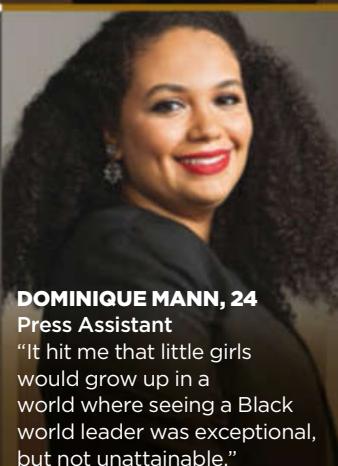
Associate Director for Health, Office of Management and Budget

"Never take a job that doesn't terrify [you]. Those are the jobs worth doing."

**DESIRÉE BARNES, 27**

Press Assistant & Senior Wrangler

"You may not be your college valedictorian, but being present and contributing will earn you a spot on this team."

**DOMINIQUE MANN, 24**

Press Assistant

"It hit me that little girls would grow up in a world where seeing a Black world leader was exceptional, but not unattainable."

**JORDAN METOYER, 23**

Assistant to the Deputy Director and Senior Advisor to the Office of Management & Budget Director

"Amazing things happen during the fourth quarter."

**KALISHA DESSOURCES, 25**

Staff Assistant for the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

"The work we do mobilizing communities is only possible with strong relationships."

**KATHERINE BRANCH, 48**

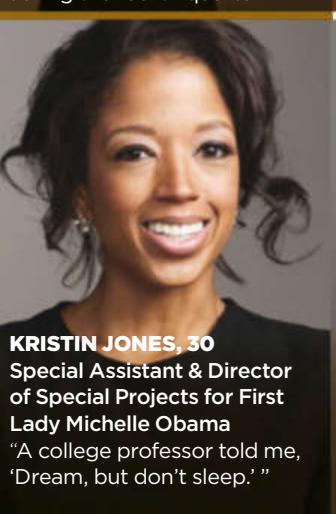
Director of Special Projects for the Office of Public Engagement & the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

"Never take anything for granted."

**KIMBERLY LEARY, 55**

Advisor to the White House Council on Women and Girls

"Despite the demanding schedules, the White House is often peaceful and quiet."

**KRISTIN JONES, 30**

Special Assistant & Director of Special Projects for First Lady Michelle Obama

"A college professor told me, 'Dream, but don't sleep.'"

**KRISTINA BROADIE, 27**

Deputy Associate Director of the Social Office

"Millennials I work with are committed to the causes of change and progress in their communities."

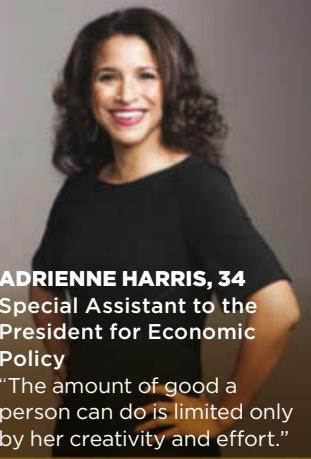
HAIR: SEVEN AND COMPANY MAKEUP: GAMELE ARMSTRONG, NYEDI ARRINGTON, ZANNI COATS, MAISIE DUNBAR, SHAUNE HAYES, MONICA JOHNSON, RENATA KELLY-RIPPY, NICOLE SOLOMON, ERIC TORY AND NYISHA VANNIKEN BARBOZA.COM



ANGELLA REID, 55
Director of the Executive Residence & Chief Usher
“As a naturalized American, I am moved by the gratitude of people invited to be sworn in as citizens.”



ADDIE WHISENANT, 31
Director of African-American Media
“Enjoy this very special moment, but never lose perspective. It is important to stay focused.”



ADRIENNE HARRIS, 34
Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy
“The amount of good a person can do is limited only by her creativity and effort.”



ASHLEIGH AXIOS, 30
Digital Creative Director
“My most inspiring moment was watching the faces of dozens of K-12 students light up as their films were screened by the President.”



CARRI TWIGG, 29
Director of Public Engagement for Vice-President Joe Biden
“I’ve learned to be patient, thorough and deliberate.”



CHYNNA CLAYTON, 27
Special Assistant & Trip Director to First Lady Michelle Obama
“The White House is composed of people who are passionate about the country.”



CRYSTAL BROWN, 35
Counselor & Senior Policy Advisor to the General Counsel, Office of Management and Budget
“Be open, be flexible and be willing to take a risk.”



CRYSTAL CARSON, 26
Special Assistant to the White House Communications Director
“Keep your head down and work hard. Distractions are endless, but tune them out.”

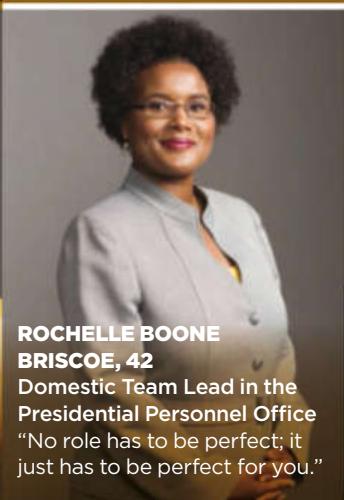


KAREN EVANS, 27
Assistant Director to the Office of Cabinet Affairs
“Always follow up with people and say thank you! Handwritten notes will get you a long way.”

Working here gives you a deep appreciation for the complexity of every situation, decision or challenge. —Carri Twigg



MONIQUE DORSAINVIL, 29
Deputy Chief of Staff for the Office of Public Engagement & the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
“You don’t need connections to work in this administration.”



ROCHELLE BOONE BRISCOE, 42
Domestic Team Lead in the Presidential Personnel Office
“No role has to be perfect; it just has to be perfect for you.”



STEPHANIE YOUNG, 31
Director of African-American Outreach for the Office of Public Engagement
“There is always a way to get to yes if you’re creative, prepared and work hard.”



TONYA WILLIAMS, 42
Director of Legislative Affairs in the Office of Vice-President Joe Biden
“Never get too comfortable. Always keep your eyes and ears open for new challenges.” □



THE POWER OF THE SISTER



VOTE



BLACK WOMEN ARE THE MOST POWERFUL VOTING BLOC IN AMERICA. NOW, MORE THAN EVER, THE WAY WE USE OUR VOICES IS PARAMOUNT IN SHAPING OUR FUTURES

BY DONNA M. OWENS
ILLUSTRATION BY KETURAH ARIEL

The stakes are high for Black women in the coming 2016 presidential election. Since we last cast our ballots for a commander in chief, the political, social and economic pendulums have swung dramatically. We have gone from experiencing the euphoria of seeing Barack Obama elected and reelected to the highest office in the nation to feeling anguish as our brothers and sisters have been killed and brutalized at alarming rates by police.

Moreover, African-American women are still struggling to recover from the 2008 recession. Earlier this year, Black Women's Roundtable, a national civic engagement group, released its annual report, *Black Women in the U.S., 2015*. It showed that while the nation's unemployment rate fell to 5.5 percent—the lowest in seven years—the jobless rate among Black women rose to 8.9 percent, the highest percentage among any female demographic within the country.

There is good news, however. African-American women are emerging as a powerful force in American electoral politics. In the 2012 presidential election, we voted at a higher rate than any other group across racial, ethnic and gender distinctions, according to a report from the Center for American Progress.

Further, several Black women have announced their candidacies for the U.S. Senate, where there hasn't been an African-American female member since Illinois' Carol Moseley Braun's term ended in 1999. Contenders include California attorney general Kamala Harris, Maryland congresswoman Donna Edwards and Andrea Zopp, a former Chicago Urban League president. Given the record numbers of Black women who ran in statewide and federal elections in 2014, momentum is expected to build around us as a key voting bloc. How we harness that burgeoning power and clout has the potential to determine our future for generations to come. ▶

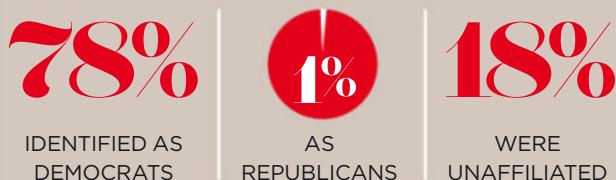
Millennials like Allyson Carpenter (who, at age 18, was sworn in as an advisory neighborhood commissioner in Washington, D.C., and became the youngest elected official in the history of the nation's capital) are particularly interested in engaging in the process. "Young Black women are trying to conceptualize what our futures are going to look like," says Carpenter, now 19 and a junior at Howard University. "Black women need someone [in the White House] who will help us push through barriers such as generations of poverty, wage inequality and other systemic issues that have disenfranchised our community."

Noting that African-American women have historically pledged our allegiance to certain causes, political parties and groups generally without similar levels of reciprocity, the Cleveland native threw out a challenge: "This upcoming election is the perfect time for Black women to finally say, 'Let's be a little selfish. Let's vote [in] our self-interests. How can we end up on top?'"

In order to assess the power of the Black woman's vote, ESSENCE teamed up with Black Women's Roundtable to launch The Power of the Sister Vote poll online and via social media platforms. The results were revealed in September at a news conference during the 45th Annual Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Legislative Conference. Asking what Black women want from the next president of the United States, the poll

POLL HIGHLIGHTS

NEARLY ALL RESPONDENTS ARE REGISTERED VOTERS AND THE FEW WHO ARE NOT DO PLAN TO REGISTER.



BLACK WOMEN SAY THEY FEEL A STRONG RESPONSIBILITY TO VOTE GIVEN OUR HISTORY.

garnered 1,862 respondents from around the country. About 35 percent were college graduates, with another 28 percent indicating that they hold graduate degrees. About 32 percent reported having children under 17 in their household.

Questioned about what top three issues are most important in the upcoming 2016 presidential election, they said affordable health care was number one, followed by living wage jobs and college affordability. For Black women ages 18 to 34, quality public education and criminal justice reform are more important, along with college affordability.

The findings also revealed that candidates who focus on

reducing taxes for low- and middle-income Americans, improving relations between the Black community and law enforcement, and increasing the federal minimum wage to at least \$15 per hour are more likely to get the Black woman's vote.

That affordable health care is so important to many Black women does not surprise Veronica Joyner, a Philadelphia educator who founded a public charter school that focuses on math, civics and the sciences. "I believe our overall health and well-being, including domestic violence, has to be addressed by any future president," says the 65-year-old wife and mother, who proudly noted that she votes in "every" election and has registered voters, too.

Valeisha Butterfield-Jones, 37, a North Carolina resident, is founder and CEO of the Women in Entertainment Empowerment Network. She says any presidential candidate seeking support from African-American women must give more than lip service to the gender wage gap. Black Women in the U.S., 2015 shows that a Black woman with a bachelor's degree earns on average \$49,882—about \$10,000 less than a White man who holds an associate's degree.

"While White women make 78 percent to the dollar of every man, African-American women make a startling 64 percent," says Butterfield-Jones, who previously served in the Obama administration, after cutting her teeth as a National Youth Vote director in his 2012 campaign. "The pay gap also goes beyond wages and includes the fact that women are less likely to have retirement savings plans, access to paid leave, and are less likely to have an offer of health insurance from their employer."

Stefanie Brown James, 34, founder and executive director of Brown Girls Lead, Inc., a leadership development organization, echoed those sentiments. "Economic stability, equality and empowerment are at the top of my list of issues that could especially help African-American women progress in this country," says the D.C. resident, who was formerly a national field director for the NAACP. "Considering that more than one in four Black women are living below the poverty line, while [often] playing the primary caretaker roles within our families is disturbing. It represents an urgent crisis in the community." The differences between what Black women bring home in their paychecks versus the higher salaries that White males and others earn demands attention, she says. "When you look at this long term, how can Black women create generational wealth for their families, if they can't even afford to put food on the table every day or afford to send their children to college? This is not just an issue for the next administration to seriously address, but one for civil rights and social justice organizations to prioritize, as well."

Indeed, there's a whole new class of Black female leaders heading their own nonprofits, think tanks and political action committees. More and more, they're pushing candidates on issues that heretofore have not gotten much play.

Among them are Kimberly Peeler-Allen and Glynda C. Carr, cofounders of Higher Heights for America. The nonprofit works to build national infrastructure that empowers Black female

leadership. "Black women represent a major political constituency, consumer base and volunteer base. Yet we have largely been left out of important debates related to everything from economic to reproductive justice," says Carr, 43.

Peeler-Allen adds, "At a time when we are celebrating major political victories from access to affordable health care to marriage equality, we are faced with attempts to roll back 50 years of progress."

Higher Heights has been hosting salon conversations with Black women in living rooms, community centers and beauty shops across the country, and plans over the next couple of months to create its own 2016 presidential survey. The organization aims to compile the responses and send an open letter to every declared presidential candidate.

Meanwhile, Black Women's Roundtable will also submit questionnaires to presidential candidates. Besides queries that cover health care, education, affordable housing and equal pay, the contenders for commander in chief will be asked if they support restoring key provisions of the Voting Rights Act, if they will consider nominating a Black woman to the Supreme Court, and what senior advisory positions African-American women hold in their campaigns.

Carr says she is waiting to see if the presidential candidates are planning to engage Black women in a significant way. "Candidates and their campaigns cannot wait to pour millions of dollars into the Black community 14 days before the election. What was proven in 2008 and 2012 is that Black women are a key component to a winning coalition," says Carr. Peeler-Allen adds, "Candidates must invest and effectively communicate with Black women and not take our vote for granted."



Tara Wall, 45, a senior media and engagement strategist for the Republican National Committee (RNC), concurs. She's well aware that Black women overwhelmingly vote for Democratic candidates, but she's not convinced that strategy is working. "Ask yourself if you're doing all you can to ensure the candidate that represents you is really representing you and your set of beliefs. Be honest with yourself about the candidates you've supported or may be thinking about supporting. Examine their promises made versus those kept and assess whether they mesh with your ballot box goals."

Predicting that 2016 will be among the "most interesting election cycles in modern history," Wall believes this crop of presidential candidates should articulate how their policies would impact small businesses owned by minorities and women; create an environment where government "gets out the way" of common sense, and foster innovation without stifling growth while keeping what she dubbed "overly burdensome" taxes and regulations to a minimum. "The bottom line is that the more Black women have both sides vying for every vote, as opposed to one or two segments of the country, the better off we are as a nation and equipped as an electorate," she says. "No one candidate or party can or should take a single vote for granted and we shouldn't let them."

Social movements such as Black Lives Matter and Say Her Name, along with criminal justice reform, were cited as important issues of this 2016 race, especially for Black millennials. Carpenter reinforces, "No candidate should earn a single Black vote without committing to repealing the racist laws and policies that have tormented our communities for decades." □



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2016

Melanie L. Campbell, convener of Black Women's Roundtable, has been a leader in civil, women's rights and social justice movements for two decades. Of her work, she says, "Achieving victories for Black women is my passion." Here, she talks about the power of our vote and what's next for BWR

ESSENCE: Describe the work of the BWR.

MELANIE CAMPBELL:

We're a diverse, intergenerational group of Black women civic leaders from regional, national and international organizations and institutions. We champion fair and equitable public policy on behalf of Black women and girls, promoting their health and wellness, economic security and prosperity, education and global empowerment.

ESSENCE: Were any of the poll responses surprising?

CAMPBELL: No. These issues don't exist within a bubble; they are interrelated. Health care is such a big issue because in many states where Black people live, some governors have rejected the Affordable Care Act and not taken advantage of Medicaid expansion opportunities that affect poor people.

ESSENCE: What does BWR have planned for 2016?

CAMPBELL: We are organizing campaigns across the country, not just at the presidential level, but at the local and state level. We're also in phase two of our Healthy, Wealthy, Wise National Empowerment Tour, which provides women in key states, like Florida and North Carolina, with resources focused on economic empowerment, entrepre-

neurship, holistic health, civic engagement and leadership development.

ESSENCE: What would you say to Black women about the importance of voting?

CAMPBELL: When a Black woman pulls the lever, it's not just about her. We are influences to our families, husbands, partners and children. Know that you have that power and people are paying attention.



Rock'n' Rolla

RECORDING ARTIST **JILLIAN HERVEY**, THE BLONDE HALF OF THE IT GROUP **LION BABE**, TOOK A STYLISH STROLL WITH US THROUGH BROOKLYN'S TRENDY BUSHWICK NEIGHBORHOOD AMID THE BOLD MURALS THAT ECHO HER ROARING FLAIR

BY CHUCK ARNOLD | PHOTOGRAPHY BY RONY SHRAM | FASHION EDITOR: JOIE THORPE



Cushnie et Ochs
crop top and tube
skirt. **Erickson**
Beamon ring.
Mural by
@dasicfernandez. ▷



“I wanted to be my own person and stay away from the singing and the acting.”

Opposite page:
Adrienne Landau fox-fur vest. **Jay Godfrey** asymmetrical gown.
Casa Reale diamond rings.
Mural by @fishwithbraids.

This page:
T by Alexander Wang cutout crop top. **Electric Feathers** genie pants. **Balmain X H&M** belt. **Amanda Marmer** rings.
Erickson Beamon ring. **Alejandra G** stilettos.
Mural by @dasicfernandez.

As the funky front woman for the neosoul duo Lion Babe—whose self-titled EP has pumped up the buzz for its upcoming debut album—Jillian Hervey is fulfilling her musical destiny: She is the daughter of Vanessa Williams and her first husband, Ramon Hervey II, who has managed everyone from Babyface and Natalie Cole to Williams herself. “Just coming from a musical family, I was always surrounded by it,” says Hervey, 26. “On the car rides to school, my mom loved playing A Tribe Called Quest and the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and then my dad was listening to a lot of Bill Withers and Stevie Wonder. Both of my mom’s parents were music teachers, so I got a lot of knowledge about everything from classical music to jazz to musicals.”

Before forming Lion Babe with producer and instrumentalist Lucas Goodman, Hervey was pursuing a dance career, having studied contemporary and modern dance at The New School in New York City. “I wanted to be my own person and stay away from the singing and the acting,” she says. “I’m not one to run around and say who my mom is. She definitely—from day one—taught us all to be very independent.” Clearly Hervey got the whole independent thing down, not even letting Williams know about Lion Babe at first. “It was certainly a concern initially,” she says of following her mother into the music business. “So I didn’t really tell her about it.”

Now Hervey is making a name for herself, not just with Lion Babe songs like the Pharrell Williams-produced “Wonder Woman” but also with her striking look, which is topped off with a signature mop of curly locks. “It’s my version of a lion’s mane,” says Hervey, whose style idols include Josephine Baker, Naomi Campbell and Chaka Khan. “Onstage I channel my inner goddess. Everyday Jillian is definitely more low-key: jeans and a crop top with a sneaker or boot.” And if she needs fashion advice or any other diva pointers, Mom is always available. “We’re very different in how we express ourselves, but she’s a great example,” says Hervey. “She came into her career at a time when the whole world was judging her [following her Miss America scandal]. If she got through that, then I can get through anything.” ▶





“Onstage I channel my inner goddess.
Everyday Jillian is more low-key.”

BEAUTY NOTE

Smoke out your lids with a dark and stormy eye shadow mix. Try **Dior** 5 Couleurs Couture Eyeshadow Palette in Pied-de-Poule.

Opposite page: **MM6 Maison**

Margiela moto jacket.

Rebecca Minkoff tank. **Ash Studio**

Paris leather pants. **Casa Reale**

diamond ring. **Diesel** boots.

On Lucas Goodman: **Azeza**

custom python and lambskin

vest. Shirt and pants, stylist's

own. Mural by @hfelectrictattoo

and @ojidjo. □

This page: **Balmain x H&M**

leather jacket and necklace.

Zimmermann skirt. **Christian**

Louboutin heels. Mural by

@fishwithbraids. □

For details, see Where to Buy.

Hair, Chuck Amos/Jump

Management. **Makeup**,

Yuui/Yuui Vision.

Manicure, Mayumi

Abuku/Rona

Represents.



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NEW ORLEANS LOUISIANA
2015 ESSENCE Festival
PRESENTED BY *Coca-Cola*

♥ FESTIVAL GOERS BROUGHT THE LOVE TO ESSENCEFEST! ♥

Nearly a half million attendees converged upon New Orleans July 2-5 for the 2015 ESSENCE Festival®, one of the country's largest live events. The annual 4-day Festival featured entertainment, empowerment, and cultural experiences during the day and the world's best performers each night. We kicked off the weekend, with the Inaugural ESSENCE Festival 'Day of Service' and brought all of our stages to life with over 80 performing artists including some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry such as Kevin Hart, Usher, Mary J. Blige, Missy Elliott, Common and Kendrick Lamar & with over 120 speakers, authors, leaders and celebrities including Deepak Chopra, Iyanla Vanzant, Steve Harvey, Keke Palmer, Kelly Rowland, Jussie Smollett and Rev. Al Sharpton.

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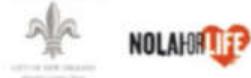


We kicked off the weekend on Thursday, with the Inaugural ESSENCE Festival 'Day of Service' which commemorated the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina by refurbishing schools citywide and staging a first-time community Health & Wellness Fair powered by Walmart.

POWERED BY



SPONSORED BY



ESSENCE NOW PLAYING CONCERT

The Festival weekend kicked off with the **ESSENCE® Now Playing Concert** sponsored by **Verizon**, with performances by Lecrae and Trey Songz on Thursday night in the Louisiana Superdome.

SPONSORED BY

verizon

Trey Songz



Crowd lights up the Superdome with their smartphones.



ESSENCE *Day Party* DJ SERIES

Four days of non-stop dancing for the ESSENCE® Day Party. We partied together at the Sugar Mill with live performances, guest DJs, drink specials and sexy crowds.



1. The cast of Fox's *Empire* join Spinderella to bring the heat to Saturday's day party.
2. Festival-goers get front row VIP treatment.
3. *Minority Report's* Meagan Good gets the party started.
4. A Party-goer gets her makeup refreshed at the COVERGIRL #GETTHATGLAM Touch-up Bar.
5. Dj Funk Master Flex got the party popping.
6. Festival VIPs celebrated their beauty dressing in all white.
7. Sharing a bite and a Coke was the core of the ESSENCE Food Truck Experience.
8. Party-goers snapped selfies with Coca-Cola cans baring the perfect phrase.



ESSENCE® EATS FOOD TRUCK ALLEY SPONSORED BY 



EMPOWERMENT EXPERIENCE

Transforming lives daily starting with the Empower U series workshops and the highly anticipated Empowerment Experience featuring Friday's theme of *Bringing Purpose*, Saturday's theme of *Bringing Peace* and Sunday's theme of *Bringing Prayer* that included the 2015 All-Star Gospel Tribute to Kim Burrell sponsored by Walmart.



2015 All-Star Gospel Tribute

SPONSORED
BY **Walmart**
#HappyToHelp



ESSENCE EMPOWER U

ESSENCE® Editors, life coaches and lifestyle experts facilitated workshops and classroom sessions in all subjects for all to live their best life. Sponsors and partners joined ESSENCE® on The Quad for more empowering experiences that everyone could enjoy.



20



21

20. Carla Harris gives insight on how to strategize to win in life and business to the Empower U Money & Power workshop audience **21.** Guest speaker at the Empower U workshop **22.** Sarah Jakes & Touré Roberts speak on 5 Keys to Identifying Your Soul Mate **23.** Dr. Catrise Austin led a Colgate Conversation on health and wellness with Empower U attendees **24.** Kelli Fisher & Tana Gilmore discuss Dating for Women of Power at the Love & Relationships workshop **25.** State Farm Bank created conversation around money matters on the Empower U stage **26.** Southern Company shared the power of innovation with Festival-goers **27.** The ESSENCE Beauty Box makes its debut educating Festival-goers on how to subscribe **28.** Colgate encouraged everyone to flash a #brilliantsmile in their photo booth. **29.** United States Mint shared fun facts on coin collection and hosted Money Trivia on the Quad Stage

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DAILY HAPPENINGS

Each day at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, sponsor activations and partner programs engaged Festival attendees with interactive moments including live performances, meet and greets, makeovers, fun competitions, exclusive sampling and the chance to win a 2016 Ford Mustang!



30. June Ambrose paired her #rockmomcookingchronicles meals with ice cold Coca-Cola. 31. Doug E. Fresh took the crowd on a journey through 100 years of the Coca-Cola contour bottle. 32. DJ Mannie Fresh kept the Coke booth rocking during the Throwback Block Party. 33. The 2016 Ford GT was the center of attention at the Ford booth. 34. Winner of a brand new Ford vehicle, Zakee Ashante from Louisiana celebrated with Nephew Tommy on the Mainstage. 35. Festival-goers became music superstars in the McCafe lounge at the Superdome. 36. Attendees savor the sweetness of McCafe Smoothies in the McDonald's booth. 37. Power star Omari Hardwick delighted fans as he posed for photos at the State Farm booth. 38. Kid N' Play helped lucky concert-goers Get in the Groove with State Farm on the Superdome stage. 39. The Walmart booth transformed into a live game of Family Feud hosted by Steve Harvey featuring Trey Songz. 40. Walmart #HappyToHelp Ambassadors answered questions and surprised attendees with swag bags. 41. A visit to the Samsung Galaxy Rewards wall surprised fans with concert tickets, Samsung devices, and exclusive screenings. 42. Mary J. Blige sits with Dana Blair for an exclusive ESSENCE Live segment from the Samsung Galaxy booth. 43. Will Packer and Mike Epps make a memorable selfie moment with fans in the Verizon booth. 44. It's on! Kevin Hart and Terrence J. kicked off a star studded weekend of events at the Verizon booth. 45. Fabulous hair is a Festival must! MBIB kept the ladies' locks smooth and stylish all weekend long. 46. Makeover participants received a bag of beauty goodies and MBIB t-shirt to keep the beautiful going year round. 47. The cast of WGN's upcoming series *Underground* shared their behind the scenes experience. 48. Universal Pictures' *Minions* made a spectacle with their dance performance on ESSENCE® Center Stage. 49. Star of Fox's *Scream Queens*, Keke Palmer chats about the Fall launch of the upcoming show. 50. Charmin®, Tampax®, and Always® showed everyone how we can be all together confident. 51. Time to dig in with Bounty at ESSENCE® Eats.

SPECIAL THANKS TO PHOTOGRAPHERS: Gus Bennett Photography, April Cabrera, Adrienne Battistella, Sasha Matthews, Makeda Peterson, Ingrid Jones, JR Thomason, Kim LaGrue, Chris Franko Photography, Frank Micelotta/Picture Group, Chuck Cook, Matthew Hinton, Aaron, Derick Hingle, Merlin Summers, Walik Goshorn, David Willems/Zumutung, Inc., Johnny Nunez/NuBuzz Photography, Cyril Celestine, Yolanda Smith, Leslie Kenney, Ian Perry, Aaron Thornton/Red Carpet Images





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A photograph of a bride and groom dancing at their wedding. The bride is wearing a white lace gown and the groom is in a gold jacket and black pants. They are smiling and laughing. In the background, there are other people and a table with a bottle of beer.

MEET ME AT THE ALTAR

Hollywood producer Will Packer and wife Heather Hayslett share their wedding joy—and how ESSENCE brought them together

BY CHARLI PENN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
SUZANNE DELAWAR STUDIOS

At the Essence Festival in 2009, film producer Will Packer and Memphis native Heather Hayslett found themselves stuck aboard a riverboat cruise that set sail before either of them could disembark. Her company was hosting the party, while he had decided to join his friend and event host Idris Elba for a drink. They felt magic happen when they locked eyes, and soon began dating. Four years later, Packer paid homage to their beautiful NOLA beginnings when he surprised Hayslett with a heartfelt proposal onstage at Essence Fest before a crowd of 40,000 festivalgoers. "I was so shocked," she recalls. "I still have that video on my laptop. It's just amazing. Will does everything big! ESSENCE has really been a part of this whole journey."

SEX & LOVE

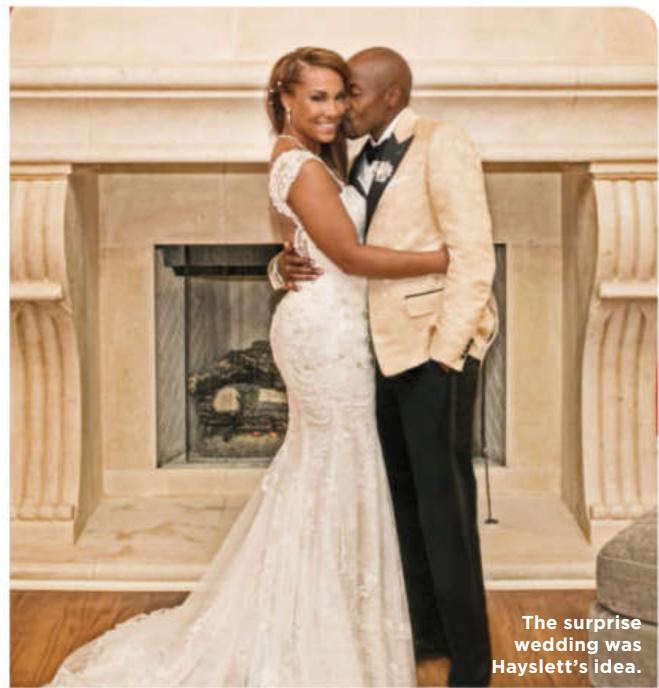
“I am imperfect, complicated, difficult and fragile—and she loves me anyway.”

Packer and Hayslett had recently moved into a new house outside of Atlanta. Around 50 of their closest family and friends, including director Tim Story and actors Terrence J. and La La Anthony, arrived at the couple's home on August 28 for what was supposed to be a dinner to kick off their housewarming. As guests took their seats at beautifully decorated café tables, it became apparent that something bigger was happening. Packer, his son turned best man Dominique, 20, and the bride's son Zion, 13, danced down the aisle to a mash-up of the opening score of *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Rich Homie Quan's "Flex (Ooh, Ooh, Ooh)." Next the bride's sister, Heidi Carroll, who served as her matron of honor, and Packer's daughters, Maya, 11, and Nija, 15, danced down the aisle to Janelle Monáe and Miguel's duet, "PrimeTime."

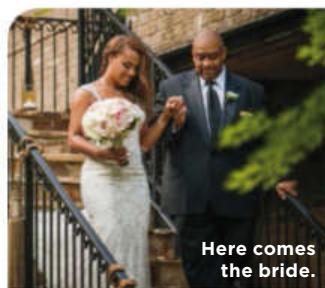
And then it was the moment for the bride to make her entrance at the surprise wedding. Singer Anthony Hamilton serenaded the crowd with a rendition of Teddy Pendergrass's "You're My Latest, My Greatest Inspiration" as Hayslett made her way to Packer. "When I saw her at the end of that aisle, I just lost it," he says. "That whole backyard was crying."

The newlyweds credit their blended family bliss to their incredible partnership. "Heather allows me to be me," Packer shares. "I am imperfect, complicated, difficult and fragile—and she loves me anyway and makes me so much better. I would be nothing if I did not have her."

It was only fitting that one of Hollywood's leading producers, responsible for hit films like *Ride Along*, *Think Like a Man* and *No Good Deed*, would have a secret wedding perfect for the plot of a romantic comedy. "We hope to inspire other Black couples and little Black girls and boys," Packer says.



The surprise wedding was Hayslett's idea.



Here comes the bride.



Packer danced his way down the aisle.



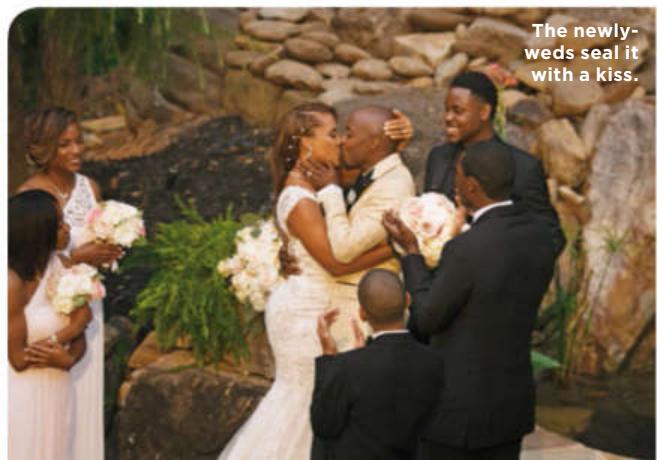
Hayslett wore a satin and lace Eve of Milady gown.



Anthony Hamilton serenaded the couple.



The bride and groom greet their guests.



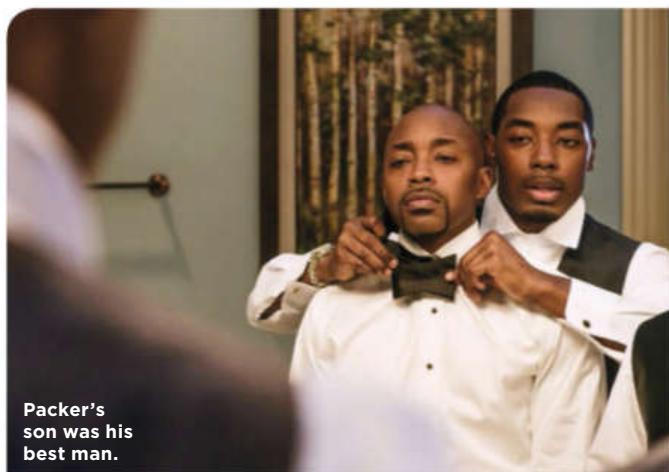
The newlyweds seal it with a kiss.



The Packers know how to party.



The couple's children and family served as the bridal party.



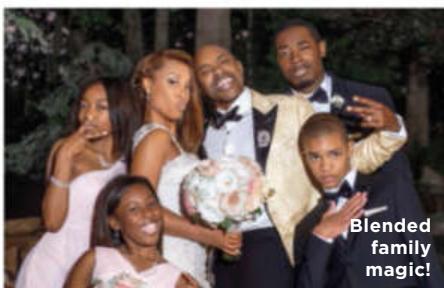
Packer's son was his best man.



Getting ready for married life



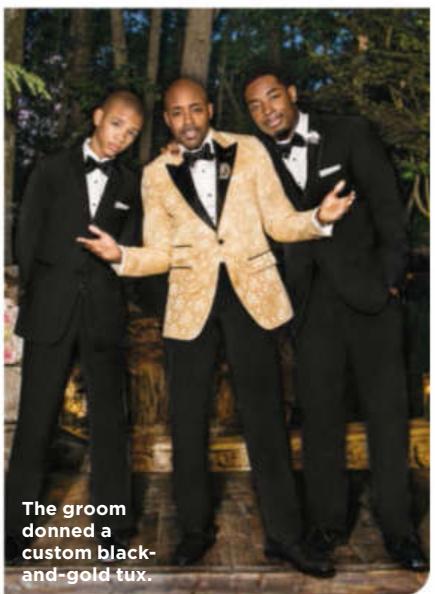
The bride, her sister (center) and Packer's two daughters



Blended family magic!



Daddy's little girls



The groom donned a custom black-and-gold tux.



Follow ESSENCE Lifestyle & Relationships Editor Charreah K. Jackson on Twitter [@CHARREAH](#).

WHEN TWO BECOMES THREE, FOUR OR MORE

MARRIAGE BLOGGERS RONNIE AND LAMAR TYLER BUST THE BIGGEST MYTHS ON BLENDING FAMILIES JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

BY TIYA CUNNINGHAM-SUMTER



The experience of merging children into a new romantic relationship can be like a smoothie. Some households blend seamlessly, while others get banana and strawberries all over the walls as they struggle to fit peacefully into new family structures. Husband and wife Ronnie and Lamar Tyler of the award-winning Web site blackandmarriedwithkids.com know all too well the concerns of mixing love with children from a previous relationship, as Ronnie's son and daughter became a part of their romance. In their new film, *Blended*, the couple tackle a subject rarely discussed in our communities, the stepfamily.

"There is a lot of shame with blended families because they are not perceived as normal," says Ronnie. Husband Lamar chimes in: "You hear about how infidelity, communication and money issues affect couples, but you don't hear about blended families and our issues." Yet couples entering new relationships with children are a growing norm. One hundred million Americans have a step relationship, 40 percent of households with children are blended and approximately 30 percent of all new weddings in the U.S. give birth to a stepfamily.

"Parents had lots of kids 100 years ago and big families were common," says Ron L. Deal, a family therapist and director of FamilyLife Blended. "In America today, children have lots of parents. Coming together as a couple is critical to bringing stability to the family as they deal with all that complexity."

The Tylers overcame their struggles with establishing their blended family before helping others. "As a biological mother, you want to discipline your kids and you also want to agree with your spouse, so you feel caught in the middle sometimes," Ronnie recalls. The couple added ground rules for governing their nontraditional home. For your family's success, it is essential to dispel the misleading beliefs highlighted in *Blended*.

Myth 1: Your love will spill over to the children. "Typically a new partner you've chosen is a stranger to the children," explains Francesca Adler-Baeder, Ph.D. "It can take years to form a good, solid relationship." Adler-Baeder is the director of the National Stepfamily Resource Center at Auburn University, a clearinghouse providing resources to stepfamilies.

Joyce Auld and husband Junious McLean, Jr., were hit with the realities of blended families when they married 14 years ago. "I was okay being a stepmother, but I didn't think all hell was going to break loose in my house," Joyce recalls of merging their troop of five children. The Covington, Georgia, couple struggled with disciplining Junious's then 10-year-old son, Andre. "The biggest problem was that we didn't share what we were going through," admits Junious. Adds Joyce: "I was so ashamed, I didn't want to tell anybody."

The turning point for Joyce and Junious was talking to other couples and discovering they weren't as dysfunctional as they thought. "There are people who have gotten through this and ▷

“Parents had lots of kids 100 years ago. Today, children have lots of parents.” —RON L. DEAL

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are making it work. We started building relationships with other couples to help us get through rough periods," says Joyce. Though their bond may not have been instantaneous, Joyce and Andre were able to work through their difficulties. "Our relationship is much better. I am thankful he and I were able to talk openly about our struggles back then and forgive each other," shares Joyce. "My advice to a married couple going through a transitional period is to remember the covenant you made to your mate. It's a season and things will get better. Be willing to seek help."

Myth 2: Kids come before the marriage.

"Your marriage is the foundation for your family and if there are cracks in the foundation, then your family can collapse," shares Ronnie. Her two kids seemed happy about her marriage to Lamar. But a year after 'I do,' their oldest child was acting out and being disrespectful. At first the couple disagreed on discipline and next steps. "We realized we needed help and found it with marriage conferences and books," she says. "The biggest thing was that we stuck together and didn't allow our kids or family to crack our marriage," Lamar adds.

Myth 3: We're going to function like a biological family. Sheila and George F. Austin II are a blended family with ten children in Montgomery, Alabama, and have been married for 15 years. In the film Sheila recalls an early Christmas for the clan. "It was my tradition to have the big Christmas, with all the hoopla," she says. She was in for a shock when she unwrapped a gift from her husband's children and discovered an empty box. The lack of a present was a harsh blow and a reality check. "I came in with the attitude, *I'm going to do everything for his children that I've done for my children*," Sheila admits. "I was not respecting their traditions and values." By learning new skills for blended families, she saved hers. Sheila realized she could only be to her stepchildren what they wanted. "I said to them, 'I could be a friend, or a mother, but it's up to you what role you want me to play,'" she shares.

And what's in a name? Plenty for many families deciding what the



RONNIE POSES WITH HER BROOD OF FOUR.



Joyce Auld wed Junious McLean, Jr., and found her way as a stepmom.



George and Sheila Austin discovered peace with a blended family of ten children.



Lamar Tyler captures the realities of couples.

“We stuck together and didn’t allow others to crack our marriage.”

—LAMAR TYLER

nonbiological parent will be called. Dwyane Wade's two sons call his wife, Gabrielle Union, by her family nickname, "Nicky." The Tylers recommend doing what works for your household and not trying to force something on the kids that might make them uncomfortable.

Myth 4: Children are forever damaged.

"There are challenges children face when their biological parents break up and there's a new relationship. When parents are nurturing, children turn out well and learn a lot about conflict management and their own role in the family," says Adler-Baeder. "If you are focused on

building a strong family, you can do it and children can turn out great." Although kids are impacted by their parents' relationship, they won't be scarred for life. "My oldest son definitely had the most challenges when it came to blending the family," recalls Ronnie. "I see the differences in him. It takes time for healing and maturity."

This holiday season, celebrate all the unique ways we love and create families.

For more information on Blended, visit blendedfamilymovie.com. □



Tiya Cunningham-Sumter (@lifenlovecoach) is a certified life and relationship coach and creator of theboldersister.com.

QUITTERS CAN WIN

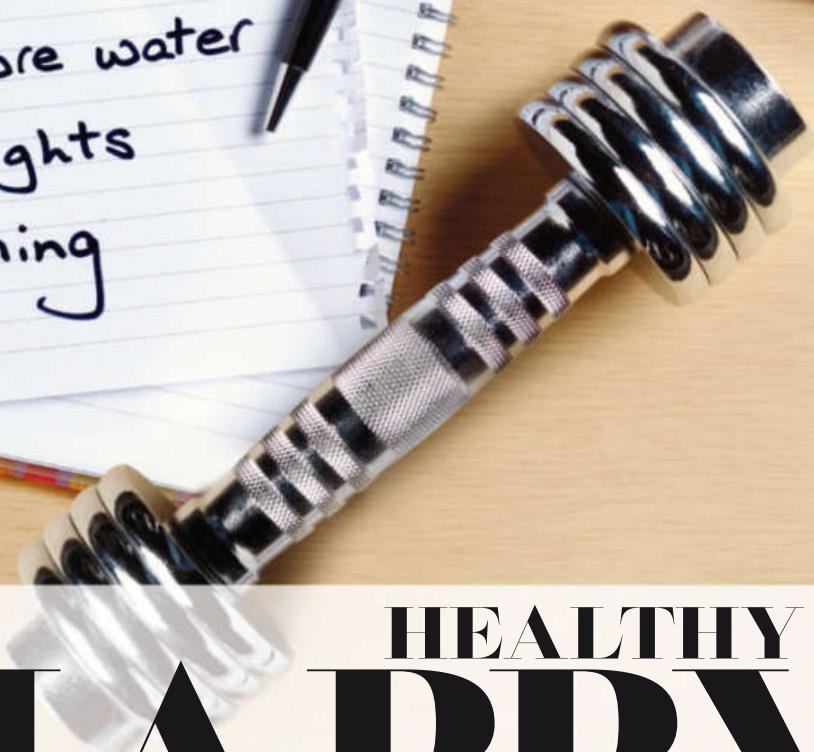
DISCOVER THE SIX-STEP STRATEGY TO KICKING UNHEALTHY HABITS FOR GOOD

BY GINA ROBERTS-GREY

We all know the old adage: Building a new habit takes at least 21 days. But what does it take to give up unhealthy or harmful routines, like smoking and late-night snacking, that have been part of our lives for years?

My life Changes

- drink less alcohol
- stop smoking
- eat less chocolate
- join Gym
- Start diet
- drink more water
- early nights
- go running



HEALTHY & HAPPY



Swap bad snacks
for healthy
options to resist
temptation.

Once your brain locks in a habit, it's not easy to let it go. "It could take twice as long as 21 days or longer," says Tom Horvath, Ph.D., author of *Sex, Drugs, Gambling, & Chocolate: A Workbook for Overcoming Addictions* (Impact). Your mind is your own personal cloud, continuously storing and protecting memories of actions like backups on your phone. Frequent behaviors such as brushing your teeth or getting dressed snag prime real estate in your mind cloud, making it easy to recall them when prompted, says George Woods M.D., neuropsychiatrist and president of the International Academy of Law and Mental Health.

The first time you perform an act, such as stopping at the vending machine on your way from your boss's office, Woods says your brain creates a folder for that memory. "If you do that only once in a while, that folder won't fill up, or move to the part of the brain responsible for subconscious thinking and actions." But if you buzz by to grab chips or candy after the next few meetings with your supervisor, your brain learns face time with a manager should be followed by junk food. Eventually your brain will note that a stop at the vending machine is a source of comfort at work and a snacking pattern will be created.

Unlike photos stored in your cloud, the files in your noggin can never truly be deleted. But they can become harder to access if new ones replace them. "To break an old habit, you must, in a sense, make a new one," says Frederick Woolverton, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and founder of The Village Institute for Psychotherapy. Whether you want to ditch your dependency on desserts, cigs or texting while driving, this six-step plan is sure to help you retrain your brain.

“A good habit shouldn’t make you feel remorseful or leave you with regret.”

—TOM HORVATH

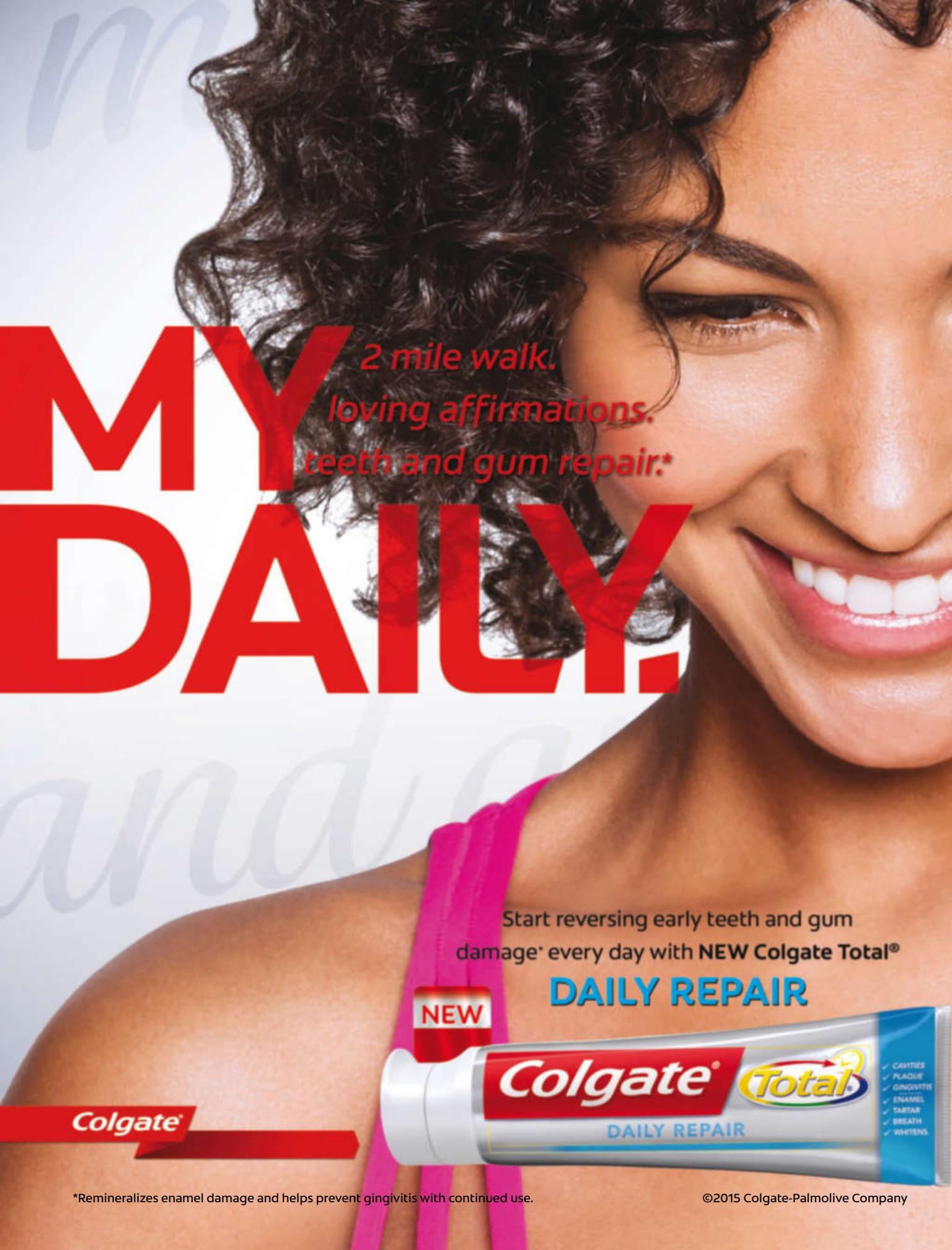
STEP 1 REALIZE CHANGE IS NECESSARY.

If you're paying an emotional, mental or physical price for a regular practice, it's time to stop it. "Consequences like embarrassments, criticisms or negative reactions from people around you are warning signs a habit is bad," says Horvath. "A good one shouldn't make you feel remorseful or leave you with regret." An action that leads to loss and shame also signals your routine could use some shaking up.

"I lost so much time with my children because of smoking," says Sheyda Irani, 38, a St. Louis mom and nurse. A smoker since she was 16, Irani developed a pack-a-day habit by her twenty-eighth birthday. "I felt like such a hypocrite because I would counsel patients with respiratory problems who smoked about the importance of quitting, and here I was going out to have a cigarette on break. I didn't know how I could look my son in the eye and tell him not to smoke or do drugs."

STEP 2 SHIFT YOUR PERSPECTIVE.

Don't get stuck in a cycle of self-loathing over the difficulty you're experiencing in altering your current routine. "Negativity rarely works to change behavior," says Woods. Instead, he suggests seeing things in a different light. "Reframe 'I have to quit smoking because it's bad for me' as 'quitting smoking will give me more time with my loved ones' to get into the positive mindset that will help you—and your brain—want to stick to a new habit." ▶



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HEALTHY & HAPPY : KICK BAD HABITS



STEP 3 PICK A NEW HABIT.

Look for healthy actions to fill the void that cutting a bad habit from your life might leave. "Break down a habit piece by piece to spot areas you can swap the negative for the positive," says Woods. That's how Andrea Calhoun, 26, trimmed more than 40 pounds from her 4'11" frame. At 19 years old, Houston-based Calhoun was prediabetic, but eating a half-dozen doughnuts at a time. "Then an hour or two after doughnuts or other desserts, I'd get a Big Mac. My eating habits were horrible," she says. A 2009 trip to the emergency room helped Calhoun see the need for adjustment.

Facing a health crisis and not wanting to catch a glimpse of her reflection, Calhoun says she "woke up" in the hospital. "Something clicked and I realized I couldn't go on like that, possibly killing myself with unhealthy eating habits," she says. Whenever the urge to pop something sweet into her mouth strikes, Calhoun, now a personal trainer and competitive bodybuilder, grabs gum instead of doughnuts. She has also replaced her late-night bags of chips and cookies with rice cakes or a handful of nuts: "I didn't give up snacking; I traded it for healthy snacking."

STEP 4 KNOW YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

Ask a family member or your bestie to be on standby for moral support or a quick pep talk via text when your willpower dips. "Nothing beats human connection and encouragement when you're struggling to change behavior," says Woolverton, who cowrote *Unhooked: How to Quit Anything* (Skyhorse Publishing). That's especially true in the early stages of your journey. "In the beginning, there will always be feelings of deprivation. That's when you

need the support of others who understand your struggle to get through those tough first few days or weeks."

Telling coworkers and loved ones about her plan to quit smoking was instrumental in Irani's efforts: "I had several moments of weakness, but having those supportive rocks and their unwavering encouragement has helped me get—and stay—smoke-free since October 2010."

STEP 5 SET A REMINDER.

Staying connected to your reason for change increases your chances of success. "Reminders help us remember what's important when we are tempted to fall back into a bad habit," says Horvath. Tape a picture of how you want to look in a bathing suit on the fridge, or set your child's photo on your phone to bring to mind what you'd lose if you text while driving.

STEP 6 TREAT YOURSELF.

Rewards can keep feelings of deprivation at bay. "Tying a positive experience to a new habit increases the likelihood you won't relapse," says Woolverton. To stay on track, every day Irani deposited \$5 in a jar—the amount she would spend on cigarettes. "At the end of the week, I rewarded myself with a splurge bought with cigarette money. Even if I needed the money for a bill, I treated myself because I didn't want to rob myself of the pleasure of a good choice for my children and me."

Be sure to cut yourself some slack. Even with rewards, reminders and a commitment to change, Horvath says replacing a bad habit can take longer than simply starting a new good one. "Instead of weeks, it can take several months to move a new habit into a spot an old one once occupied," he says.

CASH IN ON YOUR CHANGE

Giving up a bad habit is cause for celebration—and will keep you motivated. Pay yourself for your shift.





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LESSONS IN GRATITUDE

AS HER NEW CHRISTMAS ALBUM HITS STORES, INDIA ARIE SHARES HOW SHE STAYS THANKFUL AS TOLD TO CHARREAH K. JACKSON

I have a confession. With all the empowering music I've made, sometimes I have to remind myself to be grateful. When I go over my journals at the end of the year, I always realize how I'm so busy looking at all the things that need to be fixed that I sometimes look past the blessings right in front of me. I've been making it a point to be more thankful.

One way is to always push myself to search for the positive. Running a business and being an artist are hard. I'll be on the phone with my manager saying, "This didn't work; that didn't work. We need to fix these things. We need to get it done by the nineteenth." And then I'll shift to say, "But it's really nice outside. Did you see the rain?" It's kind of corny, but when I feel myself focusing on the problems, I work to balance it out by noticing something good—even if it's small. My journey in the music industry, with its racism and sexism, hasn't always been enjoyable. When I stand back and view the big picture of my life, however, I realize I truly have so much to be grateful for. Even with my struggles, I still reach people who would say "Little Things" is their favorite song, or sing along to all my songs like at Essence Festival.

I've had enough down days to really value the times when things feel just fine. So when I have one of those moments where everything feels great, I take it to the hilt like, "This is a great day!" and dance through the hallways. I am over-the-top because I know those times aren't always going to come. I ride it till the wheels fall off when it's a good day—and share it with a stranger.

I just turned 40. And one of the best things that ever happened to me in my life and career was going on tour with my hero, Stevie Wonder, this year. Watching the palpable joyous energy he was able to create every night was amazing. He has the best smile in the whole world. My goal is to make people feel the way that he makes people feel.

My life is way different than I ever expected and so much more dynamic than I ever dreamed. My highs. My lows. I'm thankful for it all.

Visit soulbird.com or download India.Arie's app Soulbird for a free copy of her book *SongVersion: I Am Light*.



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Miss Robbie puts her loving touch on this pie in progress.

SINGING MEETS SOUL FOOD

ROBBIE MONTGOMERY OF *WELCOME TO SWEETIE PIE'S* GIVES NEW MEANING TO SOUL FOOD BY MIXING HER LOVE OF MUSIC AND COOKING IN A NEW BOOK **BY LOLA ADESINA**

Wether whipping up meals for her family at home or her patrons at Sweetie Pie's restaurant—or having donned her chef's hat for her bandmates while on tour as an Ikettes with Ike and Tina Turner—Robbie Montgomery knows how to make people feel special. Affectionately known as Miss Robbie, the star of the hit OWN show *Welcome to Sweetie Pie's* started her journey to success by watching her mother, Ora Gray, in their St. Louis kitchen. Giving up some of her cooking goods, Montgomery shares sumptuous southern recipes in her new tome, *Sweetie Pie's Cookbook* (Amistad).

Montgomery's collection of down-home dishes was inspired by her

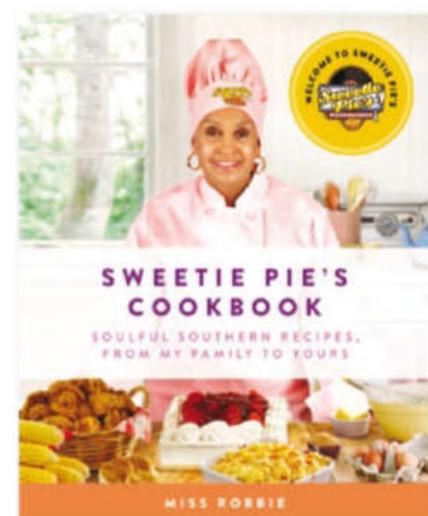
days as a singer working with Stevie Wonder and The Rolling Stones. "Singing was my first love and cooking was my second," says Montgomery, who moved to Los Angeles in her early twenties to pursue a career in music. "Back then we toured in the South, and things were really segregated. We even had to go in the back doors of some clubs and restaurants to perform. There were only one or two Black hotels in many towns." Montgomery's cooking lessons from her mom came in handy. "When I went on the road with Ike and Tina, it was really hard to come by a home-cooked meal, so I did most of the cooking for the band." With an electric skillet and a hot plate, she'd fix everything from steaks

and pork chops to mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese. "We were a family. We traveled together, we shared money and we shared our food." Touring together also cemented her friendship with Tina Turner, whom Montgomery still affectionately calls "Ann" and taught to make hot-water corn bread.

After working more than 30 years as a background singer, Montgomery decided to pursue her second love. With two locations in St. Louis, Sweetie Pie's restaurant serves up savory delectables made from recipes passed down from her mother. The cuisine attracted the likes of Oprah Winfrey, who premiered a docuseries featuring Montgomery and her son running the restaurants on OWN in 2011.

Montgomery has come a long way from cooking for her eight younger siblings and musicians on the road. Now hundreds of St. Louis locals and visitors from across the country enjoy her offerings. If you're wondering what Thanksgiving dinner is like at Sweetie Pie's, it's overflowing with flavor and love. Surrounded by friends and family, Montgomery makes sure everyone parts with a jar of her popular cranberry sauce and a helping of her soulful sass.

Check out this tasty recipe from her new cookbook. ▶





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1 whole turkey (14 lb.), fresh or frozen, thawed
1 tbsp. oil
1 tbsp. McCormick Rubbed Sage
2 tsp. McCormick Garlic Powder
2 tsp. McCormick Paprika
1 tsp. McCormick Ground Black Pepper
1 tsp. salt

PLACE turkey on rack in roasting pan. Brush with oil. Mix seasonings in small bowl. Sprinkle seasoning mixture evenly over turkey. Cover loosely with heavy duty foil.

ROAST in preheated 325°F oven 2 hours, adding an extra 15 minutes per pound for larger turkeys. Remove foil. Roast 1 hour longer or until internal temperature in thigh reaches 165°F, basting occasionally with pan juices. Remove turkey from oven. Let stand 20 minutes. Reserve pan juices to make gravy or to serve with turkey.

Makes 12 servings.



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CANDIED CARROT SOUFFLÉ

Makes 6 servings.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour 35 minutes

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 pounds carrots, cut into chunks
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- ¼ cup evaporated milk
- 1⅓ cups flour
- Small marshmallows for garnish (optional)

In a large saucepan, mix salt with 4 cups of water and bring to a boil. Add carrots, lower heat to medium-low and simmer until tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F and butter a 2-quart

casserole dish. Drain carrots. Cool slightly, then whip them in a food processor or a mixing bowl using a hand mixer until smooth, about 1 minute, stopping and scraping down the bowl as needed.

Add butter and blend until mixture is smooth again. Add in sugar, baking powder, vanilla, cinnamon and nutmeg until they are incorporated, about 30 seconds. Add eggs and evaporated milk and process for 1 to 2 minutes, until well combined. Stir in the flour and process until mixed well, about 1 minute, and then pour the mixture into the casserole dish. Garnish with marshmallows, if desired. Place the soufflé in the oven and bake until it puffs up high and doesn't jiggle when you shake the pan, about 1 hour. Don't shake it too hard—it will cause the soufflé to fall. Serve immediately.



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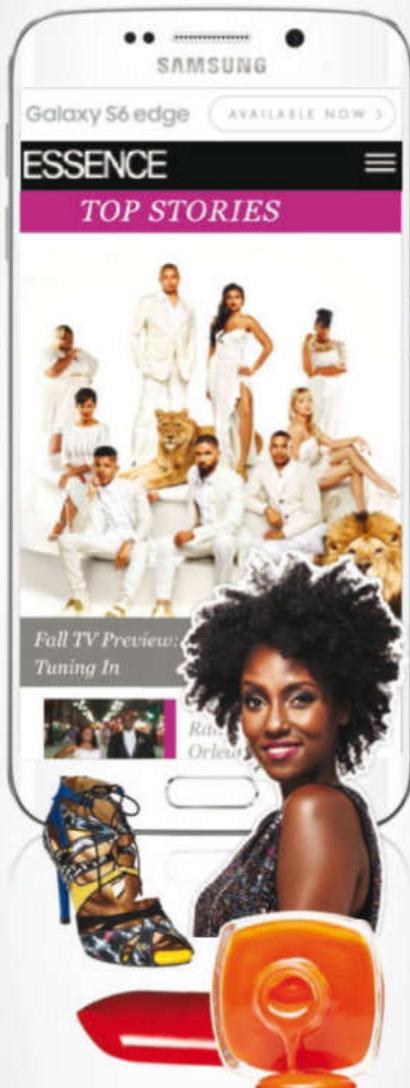


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WHERE TO BUY

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*price upon request.

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Scorpio October 23 to November 21

OVERVIEW A water sign, you're intuitive and highly emotional. Depth and intellect are an integral part of your makeup. You are strong-willed and have the capacity to overcome great obstacles, as your determination is unmatched. Anyone wanting to get next to a Scorpio should take baby steps. You drip sex appeal but blow hot or cold with very little middle ground. Generally, you're compatible with Capricorn, Cancer, Pisces and Virgo. Taurus, your opposite, pushes all your buttons, but long term you two will be pulled in opposite directions. **THE YEAR AHEAD** Though your job skills rock, don't allow your upward trajectory to be compromised by the call of the wild when a hottie enters the picture. **THIS MONTH** **LOVE:** When dating, lose the hidden agenda and enjoy the ride. Couples, mend fences. **WORK:** Your up-front approach to colleagues has some miffed but others delightfully surprised. **MONEY:** Mixing business with pleasure skews your vision. **INSPIRATION:** Gratitude can supersede issues that can overwhelm.

Sagittarius

► November 22 to December 21

LOVE: The libido may be in overdrive but don't do anything you'll regret. **WORK:** Be patient when planning your next move. **MONEY:** Find like-minded visionaries to support your project. **INSPIRATION:** Contentment is not resting on your laurels but knowing you'll get to the big picture.

Capricorn

► December 22 to January 19

LOVE: Embrace the unusual with your honey, then enjoy the fireworks. Couples, don't ignore the problems. **WORK:** Alert higher-ups if you have

too much on your plate. **MONEY:** When it comes to a raise or promotion, a positive attitude and a paper trail are important. **INSPIRATION:** Surviving brokenness can promote healing and produces a new perspective.

Aquarius

► January 20 to February 18

LOVE: Jump-start the sizzle as if it were your last hookup. **WORK:** Expect the unexpected with new duties. **MONEY:** With regard to financial documents, always read the fine print. **INSPIRATION:** When your drive and mission are clear, your passion can outweigh your fears.

Pisces

► February 19 to March 20

LOVE: Confronting your issues with gusto makes for great makeup sex.
WORK: Find balance between job responsibility and family obligation. Communication is key. **MONEY:** Spend time, not money, investigating an enterprise. **INSPIRATION:** When your heart and mind are closed off, blessings get sidetracked.

Aries

► March 21 to April 19

LOVE: Your new beau could be The One, but, hey, not so fast! Couples, develop fresh interests. **WORK:** Remember: new job, new rules and renewed patience. **MONEY:** If audits stall, hire a pro. **INSPIRATION:** The lack of depth in decision making creates deeper consequences later.

Taurus

► April 20 to May 20

LOVE: Home can be enhanced by a cutie. Couples, you are enough. **WORK:** Forget the bullies and focus on the bosses and those who count. **MONEY:** Strengthen your foundation for business by networking. **INSPIRATION:** A dream delayed can be a blessing in disguise.

Gemini

► May 21 to June 20

LOVE: Chasing or being chased suits you. Slow the roll, enjoy each other and watch the sparks fly. Couples, recommit. **WORK:** Over-analysis of coworkers slows the process. Get to the heart of the matter. **MONEY:** Investing without research and a pro on hand is risky. **INSPIRATION:** The answers to your soul-searching lie within you.

Cancer

► June 21 to July 22

LOVE: The hopeless romantic in you wants the thrill returned. Express yourself. **WORK:** Your knack for business can be parlayed into many projects or mini ones that can become major. **MONEY:** If you don't get to the source of the drama, family financial woes will continue. **INSPIRATION:** Don't allow your ego to rule.

Leo

► July 23 to August 22

LOVE: Turkey Day entertaining is your forte. Make the process fun with family and friends. **WORK:** Bosses, take note: Even if all are not on board, a meeting of the minds is essential. **MONEY:** As long as you're practical, overhauling your finances is doable. **INSPIRATION:** Believe in the promise of the goals you set.

Virgo

► August 23 to September 22

LOVE: If the blowups persist, cuddle time will be moot. **WORK:** Burning the candle at both ends only works with frequent breaks. **MONEY:** A mortgage, car or school loan needs scrutiny. **INSPIRATION:** Imperfections don't define you, but seeking perfection distracts you.

Libra

► September 23 to October 22

LOVE: Even though your It status has the line forming, take your time. Couples, try counseling. **WORK:** Any strategic moves should be driven by your skill set and workplace politics. **MONEY:** Scrutinize options before spending. **INSPIRATION:** Don't give your power away to those who want to control your destiny. □

Horoscope by **Thelma Balfour**, author of *Black Love Signs* and *Black Sun Signs* (Touchstone).

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WHAT I KNOW NOW

This summer, iconic museum curator **Thelma Golden**, 50, was chosen by President Obama to help put together his presidential library in Chicago. Here, Golden talks to ESSENCE about her greatest triumphs and hardest lessons learned

AS TOLD TO VANESSA K. DE LUCA



Thelma Golden is
a top influencer
in the art world.

The moment I knew I'd made it was when... A question about me and my career appeared on a standardized test.

The advice I'm glad I never took is... That as a young woman of color making her way in a field that was not very diverse, I would need to find ways to fit in so that I would not be perceived through my race and gender. This seemed not only impossible, but also ineffective and highly inauthentic. I needed to define success on my own terms, showing up fully as myself and seeing my difference as an advantage, not a disadvantage. I know now that what seem like your greatest challenges are actually your greatest gifts.

The toughest decision I've ever had to make was... Leaving an amazing, exciting and fulfilling professional situation without knowing what I might do next. In retrospect, while it was the toughest decision, it was also the best!

The key to happiness is... Matching one's passion with a purpose.

The hardest lesson I've ever had to learn was... To be motivated by what I am drawn toward instead of what I am feeling pushed by.

My greatest joy in life right now is... Having the incredible opportunity to be director of The Studio Museum in Harlem as we move toward our fiftieth anniversary and embark on a major expansion that will allow us to continue to present art by artists of African descent, better serve our diverse audiences and contribute to a vibrant cultural community here in Harlem and around the world.

A mantra I live by... "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." —Arthur Ashe

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